2
Bound Beauty
MICK TAKEUCHI

THE SOUL go!comi OF MANGA

Round Beauty

A grisly murder leads to shocking discoveries about her fellow Tyers as Chiko learns exactly what Aya sacrificed for his powers. Things get even more complicated when another spinner arrives. Isora is beautiful, competent – and might be Akeo's destined love! As if Chiko doesn't have enough problems, she uses her powers once again to save a little girl from torment...only to have her own thread turn against her!

$10.99 USA

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ISBN 978-1-60510-009-8

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FROM THE CREATOR OF

HER MAJESTY'S DOG

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RATED T TEEN 13+

Bound Beauty

STORY AND ART BY

MICK TAKEUCHI

VOLUME 2

go!comi

Round Beauty

2

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OUR STORY SO FAR

High school girl Chiyako has the power to see the mystical red threads that connect lovers. This leads to her being bound by contract to Shirogane, one of the five colored threads that harbor mysterious powers. In return for this, she is trapped in the body of a child. Forced to join the hot hand of Onmyoji called the Tyers, she must learn to control her power while seeing the world in a whole new way.

Fourth Binding
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

Fourth Binding 縛りの鍵

SWOON
LOVE WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS... ♡
IT MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD SO BEAUTIFUL AND BRIGHT!! ♡
Hello, world!!
Hello, sun!

WHAT A WHACKO ...
ONLY YESTER-DAY, I WAS CAUGHT UP IN...
...A NEST OF EVIL SPIRITS.
ANO JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS OEAO...
...THE MASTER SAVEO ME, ANO CARRIED ME HOME IN HIS ARMS.
BUT NOW...
SHONEN CHAMP

...I'M SO HAPPY AND EMBARRASSED, I'M AFRAID TO LOOK HIM IN THE FACE!!
Oooh, it's too much to take!!
And quit imagining Akeo-san like that. It's not real.
TMP
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT. AKEO-SAN'S NOT COMING HOME TODAY.
TMP
Did he... just read my mind!?
WAIT... WHAT?
SO, WHERE'D AKE-NII GO, ANY-WAY?
HIS GIRLFRIEND INVITED HIM OUT.

NOOOO!!
WHAT!?
D... DID YOU SAY...
...G-GIRL-FRIEND...?
THAT'S RIGHT! I FORGOT!!
THE MASTER HAS A RED THREAD AROUND HIS FINGER. HE'S ALREADY BOUND TO HIS DESTINED LOVER!
GASP
GRAB
W... WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA!?

I CAN'T SEE IT ANY-MORE!
I USED TO BE ABLE TO SEE EVERY-BODY'S...
OH, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE RED THREAD?
TYERS CAN'T SEE EACH OTHER'S THREADS OF FATE.
SNATCH
OH... I SEE.
THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE MASTER HAS SOMEBODY.
I WONDER WHAT SHE'S LIKE...
SHE'S PROBABLY GORGEOUS AND GROWN-UP...
ARE YOU CURIOUS ABOUT AKEO-SAN'S LOVER?
YOU'LL TELL ME ABOUT HER!?
SURE.

WHAT...
WHAT IS THIS...?
...FOR A PRICE.
You should quit while you're ahead, girl.
Making a deal with Aya-nii never ends well.
FOR THE WHOLE DAY...
...YOU HAVE TO BE MY SLAVE.
ME!? BE YOUR SLAVE!?
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE MYSTERY WOMAN?

Responsible for all the housework↑

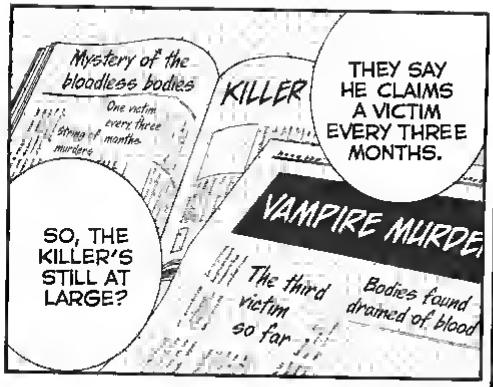
NOW THEN, I'LL START YOU OFF WITH SOMETHING LIGHT.

AAARGH!!!
CHAAAARGE!
HMM, I WONDER WHAT AKEO-SAN AND HIS GIRL ARE DOING...
FINE, IF THAT'S HOW IT'S GONNA BE...
I CAN'T...
...MOVE!
STRAAAIN
NEXT, YOU SHOULD SHAKE OUT THE COMFORTERS ...
DON'T FORGET THAT THE TREES NEED TRIMMING!
I CAN'T ...
... REACH!
A little harder, please.
Do that chore next!
And that one!

WOULD YOU BE A DOLL AND SHOP FOR DINNER?
FLAP
RICE
SQUID
BEER
RADISH
SAUCE
FLOUR
PEPPER
SNAP
PANT
PANT
CLIK
EXCUSE ME...?
SCREW THIS!! TUNA OR YELLOWTAIL!
THAT'S ALL I'M GETTING AT THE STORE, SO PICK ONE!!

MAY I HELP YOU?
UH...
TUNA, THEN.
OKAY ...
...
PLEASE SIT DOWN. WE HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT.
THE HIGHER-UPS GAVE ME YOUR CASE.
!
THAT'S RIGHT ...
YOU MUST BE KUDO-SAN.

...MY LITTLE SISTER HITOMI WAS KILLED.
THREE MONTHS AGO...
!!!
I'M FAMILIAR WITH THE INCIDENT.
IT WAS ON THE NEWS FOR A WHILE.
!
HER BODY WAS FOUND ALMOST COMPLETELY DRAINED OF BLOOD...
...AND DISCARDED IN THE RIVER.


Mystery of the bloodless bodies
One victim every three months
String of murders
KILLER
VAMPIRE MURDE
The third victim so far
Bodies found drained of blood
THEY SAY HE CLAIMS A VICTIM EVERY THREE MONTHS.
SO, THE KILLER'S STILL AT LARGE?

OH!
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THAT STRING OF MURDERS PEOPLE ARE BLAMING ON A VAMPIRE!

SHE WORKED TO SUPPORT HERSELF, AND TOOK LESSONS ON THE SIDE.
YOU'D NEVER SEE A MORE HARD-WORKING GIRL.
HITOMI CAME TO TOKYO...
...TO FULFILL HER DREAM OF BECOMING A MODEL.
I REMEMBER THE DAY SHE TOLD ME SHE'D FINALLY BEEN SCOUTED BY A MODELING AGENCY.
I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED THIS HAPPENING TO HER...

PLEASE ...
GRIP
...FIND WHOEVER DID THIS TO HER.
I WILL NEVER FORGIVE THE MONSTER...
...WHO KILLED MY PRECIOUS SISTER!
NEVER!!
I CAN'T LEAVE THIS TO THE POLICE.
I SWEAR...
...HE WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!!

THE KILLER AND THE VICTIM...
...ARE CONNECTED BY A STRONG NEGATIVE BOND.
WE OFTEN GET CASES THE POLICE CAN'T HANDLE.
I DIDN'T KNOW THE TYERS TOOK CASES LIKE THIS.
CLINK
NOW'S OUR CHANCE TO SHOW YOU OUR REAL WORTH AS TYERS!
CLENCH
OKAY, KIDDIES. YOU'RE STAYING TO WATCH THE HOUSE.
Our real worth...
WHAT!? WHAT GIVES!?

IF WE DON'T GET THIS GUY SOON, HE'LL KILL AGAIN!
I'M SORRY, BUT ...
YEAH!
PLUS, HITOMI-SAN WAS KILLED THREE MONTHS AGO!
AKE-NII'S M.I.A.!
YOU'LL NEED HELP WITH THIS CASE!
FREEZE
...YOU YOUNGSTERS WILL ONLY GET IN MY WAY.
I'M LEAVING YOU HOME BECAUSE THIS WILL BE TOO MUCH FOR YOU.
IN OUR LINE OF WORK, THEY'RE ALL IMPORTANT.
THIS IS A REALLY IMPOR-TANT CASE!
HEY! IT'S NOT MY FAULT I GOT STUCK WITH THIS BODY!!
DON'T CALL ME A YOUNGSTER!
Do I look four feet tall!?

...DON'T LOSE IT, OKAY?
BUT IF YOU INSIST...
...ON STICKING YOUR NECK OUT...
-SIDE-SPACE

NOW THEN...
WHERE TO START?
SO THIS WAS HITOMI-SAN'S PLACE, HUH?
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD PUT SO MANY FRILLS IN ONE ROOM.
Is this Gothic Lolita style?
SO, YOU REALLY DON'T MIND LOSING YOUR NECK, HUH?
COME ON! YOU KNOW I CAN'T JUST SIT BACK AND MISS ALL THE ACTION!
PUUUUL
I am a man!

ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME YOU CAN SUDDENLY SPIN OJIN WHERE THERE'S NO EARTH INVOLVED?
Oops
YOU WANT TO HELP?
Down with the tyrant!
Rights for the disabled!
YEAH!! GIVE US A CHANCE!!
WE'RE ON THE FIFTH FLOOR.
AND HER BODY WAS FOUND IN THE RIVER.
HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY HELP?
Fine...
AS FOR YOU, YOU HAVE NO CONTROL OVER WHEN YOUR SHIROGANE SPINS.
I don't need this...
I'VE NEVER ONCE SEEN YOU USE THE FIVE COLORED THREADS!
JAB
BESIDES, WHAT CAN YOU DO, AYA-SAN!?
HEY!
THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO ME!

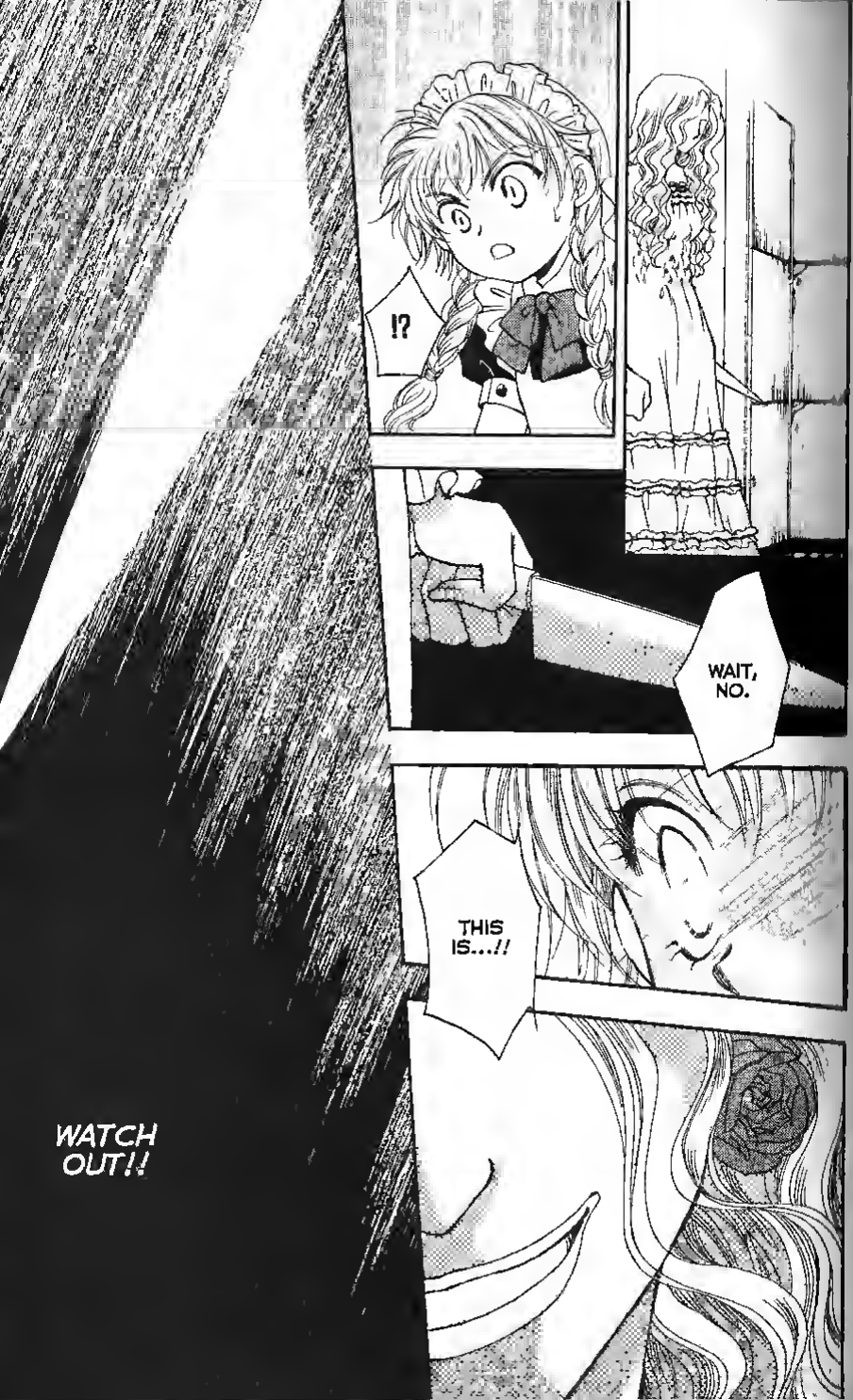
FINE. ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU EXACTLY WHAT I DO.
THEN, YOU GO HOME.
THIS SHOULD DO IT.
BLOOD
AND LET'S CHECK IN HERE...
POP
RUMMAGE
!
PERFUME?

IF THE VICTIM WAS CARRYING THIS LIQUID ON HER...
...IT MIGHT HAVE ABSORBED REALLY STRONG ENERGY.
BY BLENDING AND ABSORBING ...
...IT CAN FUSE SPECIAL TRAITS AND ABILITIES.
POP
SPLASH
LIQUID POSSESSES THE POWER...
KNEEL
...TO REFLECT ENERGY.
MAY THE CEREMONY COMMENCE.
PLIP

THE PERFUME'S TURNING BLACK!
OH, REGRET THAT SINKS INTO BLACK DEPTHS.
FAZE
TURN
DRAW YOURSELF UP TO THE SURFACE OF THIS LIQUID.
SPLISH
OH, GREAT STRINGS OF FATE.
I OFFER YOU MY TYING.

KOKURYU*/
THOOM

EMERGE
OH MY GOD!
IT'S HITOMI-SAN!
IT'S THE VICTIM'S MEMORIES.
I WONDER IF THIS LADY'S FROM THE AGENCY, TOO.
AND THIS LOOKS LIKE A PHOTO SHOOT.
THIS MUST BE WHEN SHE GOT SCOUTED AS A MODEL.


!?
WAIT, NO.
THIS IS...!!
WATCH OUT!!

GASP
THAT'S ENOUGH.
OKAY.
RISE
BUT THAT PERSON...
...WAS THE KILLER!!
MOST LIKELY, IT WAS.
IF WE HAD KEPT WATCHING, WE'D KNOW FOR SURE.
W... WE HAVE TO GO TO THE POLICE, RIGHT NOW!!
DASH
AND TELL THEM WHAT?

...TIE THE STRINGS OF FATE...
...SO THE KILLER WOULD GO TO JAIL.
WELL THEN ...!
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO ARREST THE KILLER!?
"I SAW THE MURDERER IN A STRING VISION"?
THEY'LL NEVER BELIEVE YOU.
I WASN'T HIRED TO...
YOU TOOK ON THIS CASE KNOWING THAT!?
THIS IS OUR JOB.
DON'T TELL ME WE'RE HELPING...
...THE CLIENT TAKE REVENGE ON THE KILLER!?

I WILL NEVER FORGIVE THE MONSTER THAT KILLED MY PRECIOUS SISTER.
SHE MAY GO TO THE POLICE ABOUT IT.
OR SHE MAY TRY TO KILL HIM HERSELF.
I SWEAR HE WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!
AND THEN BIND OUR CLIENT TO THAT CULPRIT.
WE FOLLOW THE STRINGS OF FATE... ...TYING THE VICTIM TO THE CULPRIT.
ALL WE'RE DOING IS TYING THE LOOSE ENDS... ...THAT NEED TO BE TIED.
IT'S THE CLIENT'S DECISION... ...AS TO HOW THEY DEAL WITH THE NEW BOND.

IF SHE CAN'T SEE THE VALUE OF THAT HUMAN LIFE...
...THAT'S HER PROBLEM.
... THAT SHE FEELS MURDER IS JUSTIFIED.
HER RAGE MAY BE SO GREAT ...
WE CAN'T LET KUDO-SAN...
...TURN HERSELF INTO A CRIMINAL!
OF COURSE, I PITY BOTH SISTERS...
...FOR BEING VICTIMIZED.
THE WORLD ISN'T AS PURE AND BEAUTIFUL AS YOU THINK IT IS.
BUT JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE DESERVES PITY...
...DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE GOOD PEOPLE WHO WON'T COMMIT CRIMES.

LEAN
THE SAME GOES FOR AKEO-SAN.
!
THADUMP
IF YOU TRUST OTHER PEOPLE TOO MUCH...
...YOU'LL END UP GETTING STABBED IN THE BACK.
BLUSH

SHOVE
WHY!?
WHY DO YOU SEE PEOPLE THAT WAY!?
YOU'RE THE ONE...
...I SHOULDN'T EVER TRUST!
YOU HEART-LESS...
...SADISTIC FOUR-EYES!!

PASS
AYA-NII...
YOU TEASED HER TOO HARD.
DASH
HEH HEH...
I CAN'T HELP IT. SHE'S JUST SO RIGHT-EOUS.
I CAN'T STAND PEOPLE LIKE HER.

RRRRUMPLE
I'M JUST FIGURING OUT HOW TO GET TO THE KILLER BEFORE THAT LAME-ASS FOUR-EYES!!
.....
OH, IT'S NOT THAT.
DON'T PAY ATTEN-TION TO HIM.
HEY...
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO FIND HIM WITHOUT ANY LEADS?
OH, I HAVE A LEAD.
Whoa. Talk about bouncing back.
TWINKLE
YOU SAW HITOMI-SAN'S ROOM, DIDN'T YOU?
MY FIRST BIG CLUE IS GOTHIC LOLITA!
HUH?

THE MAGAZINE HITOMI-SAN WAS PUBLISHED IN...
...IS KNOWN FOR SCOUTING MODELS HERE.
EVERYBODY DRESSES UP THEIR BEST...
...HOPING TO GET THEIR PICTURE TAKEN.
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
SO I HOPE YOU SEE, TSUNA, THAT-
TSUNA!?
HOW'D WE GET SEPARATED SO FAST!?
THIS PLACE IS PACKED WITH TOURISTS.
OF ALL THE DAYS TO FORGET MY CELL...!

HEY, YOU!
Hmmm
CUTE OUTFIT.
YOU DRESSING UP WITH YOUR MOMMY?
It's fairly common to see mother-daughter pairs like that.
YES?
YOU ALONE?
ARE THESE GUYS...
Oh, great. They think I'm dressed all Gothic Lolita.
EVER THOUGHT ABOUT MODELING?
...SCOUTING MODELS!?
WE'RE FILMING AT A STUDIO NOT FAR FROM HERE.
MAYBE THEY KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT HITOMI-SAN.
TUG
Huh!?
WANNA COME SEE?
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF HER!

WHAT...?
SHE'S ALREADY CONTRACTED TO MY AGENCY.
SCURRY
Tak!
?
?
OF ALL THE...!
YOU SHOULDN'T GO NEAR GUYS LIKE THEM!
SURE, SOME ARE SCOUTING MODELS.
BUT SOME ARE LOOKING FOR GIRLS TO MAKE PORN FILMS.
Even little girls like you!
GAAAH!

BEEP
DID YOU REACH YOUR BROTHER?
COP
HEY, TSUNA? IT'S ME, CHIKO.
YEAH, I'LL BE WAITING AT THE CROSS-WALK. UH-HUH.
COME QUICK, 'KAY?
YEAH! THANKS FOR SAVING ME...
...FROM THOSE BAD GUYS AND... ...LETTING ME USE YOUR PHONE.
What a nice guy!
Not to mention the crepe he bought me!
BEAM
BEAM
...BE SNARED BY THOSE GOONS.
I COULDN'T LET A SWEET LITTLE GIRL LIKE YOU...
NO PROBLEM AT ALL!

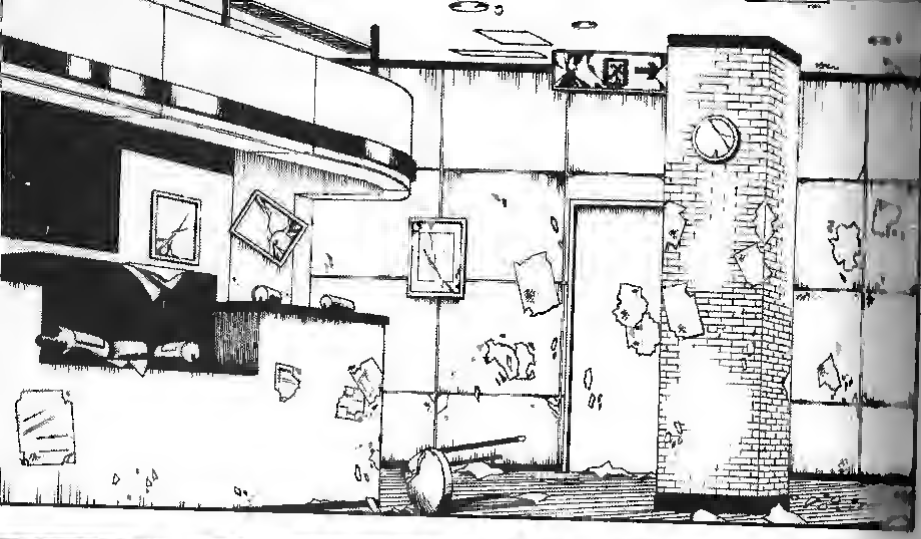
GLOW
AND I JUST LOVE CUTE LITTLE GIRLS!!
.....
OH! AND I PROMISE...
...I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH PORN.
R Agency
Shusuke Miyahara
Shinjuku district, Tokyo
ACTUALLY, I'M A SCOUT MYSELF.
AH, YES ...
I HAVE SEEN HER.
UM ... HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THIS GIRL AROUND?

A WOMAN?
WITH LONG WAVY HAIR, LIKE THIS!
YEAH!
REALLY!? DID YOU EVER SEE A WOMAN SCOUT HER!?
I MAY HAVE TAKEN SOME SHOTS OF HER.
She's a cute girl, after all.
OH... OKAY.
...I DON'T KNOW OF ANY WHO FIT THAT DESCRIPTION.
THERE ARE PLENTY OF FEMALE SCOUTS IN THE FIELD, BUT...
THERE ARE EVEN RUMORS OF PEOPLE MAKING SNUFF FILMS!
!
OKAY, TAKE CARE. WATCH OUT FOR GOONS.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH, BUT I HAVE TO GO NOW!
OH WELL. BETTER GET BACK TO TSUNA.
BOW

UH... WHAT'S A SNUFF FILM?
Like that tobacco product?
NO, NO!
MIND YOU, IT'S JUST A RUMOR.
A SNUFF FILM...
...IS WHEN THEY FILM AN ACTUAL KILLING. NO SPECIAL EFFECTS OR TRICKERY.
IN SHORT, THEY'RE HOMICIDE VIDEOS.
THEY ALLEGEDLY CIRCULATE ON THE BLACK MARKET.
HOMICIDE !?
YOU MEAN WITH BLOODY SCENES AND STUFF?
YEAH, IT'S REALLY DISTURBING.
THAT MIGHT BE..
...LINKED TO HITOMI-SAN'S DEATH!!

TURN
DIDN'T YOU HEAR A WORD I JUST SAID?
OH, YEAH! THEY SAID THERE WAS A STUDIO AROUND HERE!
WHERE CAN I FIND THOSE GOONS?
WHAT!? ARE YOU INSANE!?
H... HOLD ON!
WAIT!
WHAT ABOUT MY CELL PHONE!?
GIVE IT BACK!

WAIT A SEC-OND!
WHY AM I SHOWING YOU THIS PLACE!?
HERE GOES!
SO THAT'S THE BUILDING, HUH?
YEP.
IT USED TO BE A CLUB, BUT IT'S NOT USED ANY-MORE.
SHOP
INDIAN CUISINE
MIYAHARA-SAN.
HIT REDIAL AND GET MY RIDE TO MEET US AT THIS BUILDING!
HUH!?
WAIT A GOSH DARN MINUTE!
YOU'RE GOING IN THERE!?
ALONE !?
WHY WON'T YOU LISTEN TO ME!?
DASH!



IF THEY PLAYED LIVE MUSIC HERE, THE WALLS ARE SOUND-PROOF.
IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE FOR A MURDER.
Hmmm...

CLATTER

WELL...
I CAN SEE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE, BUT...
...IT LOOKS PRETTY DESERTED NOW.

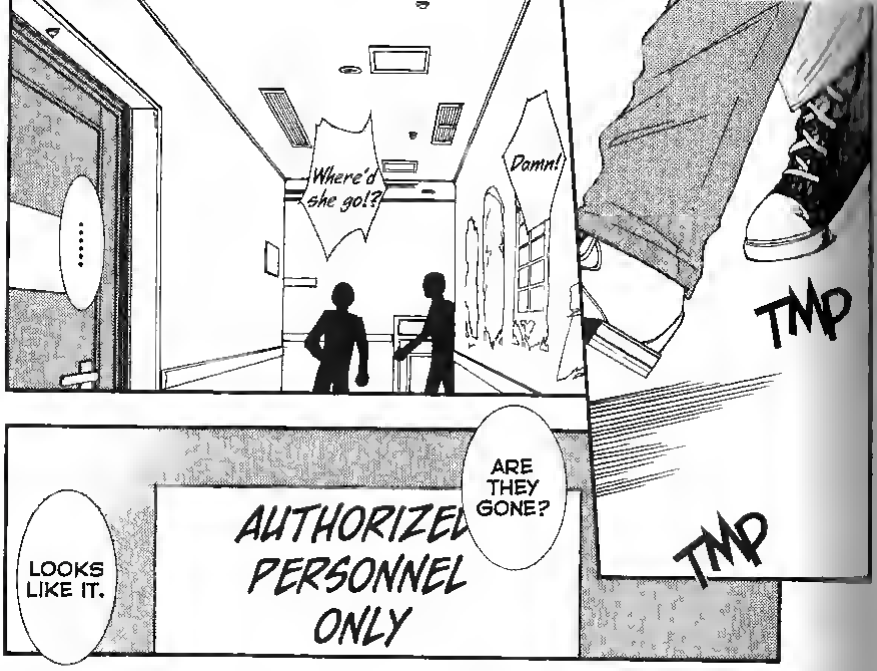
JUMP
EEEEEEEEK
!?
WHAT WAS THAT...
...SCREAM!?

Fifth Binding
縛りの伍

EEEK
!?
STAB
THAT SCREAM...
...CAME FROM THE NEXT ROOM!!

EEEEEK!!
FREEZE
WAAAAAH!!
CRUSH
WHOA!
AH!
UH-OH...

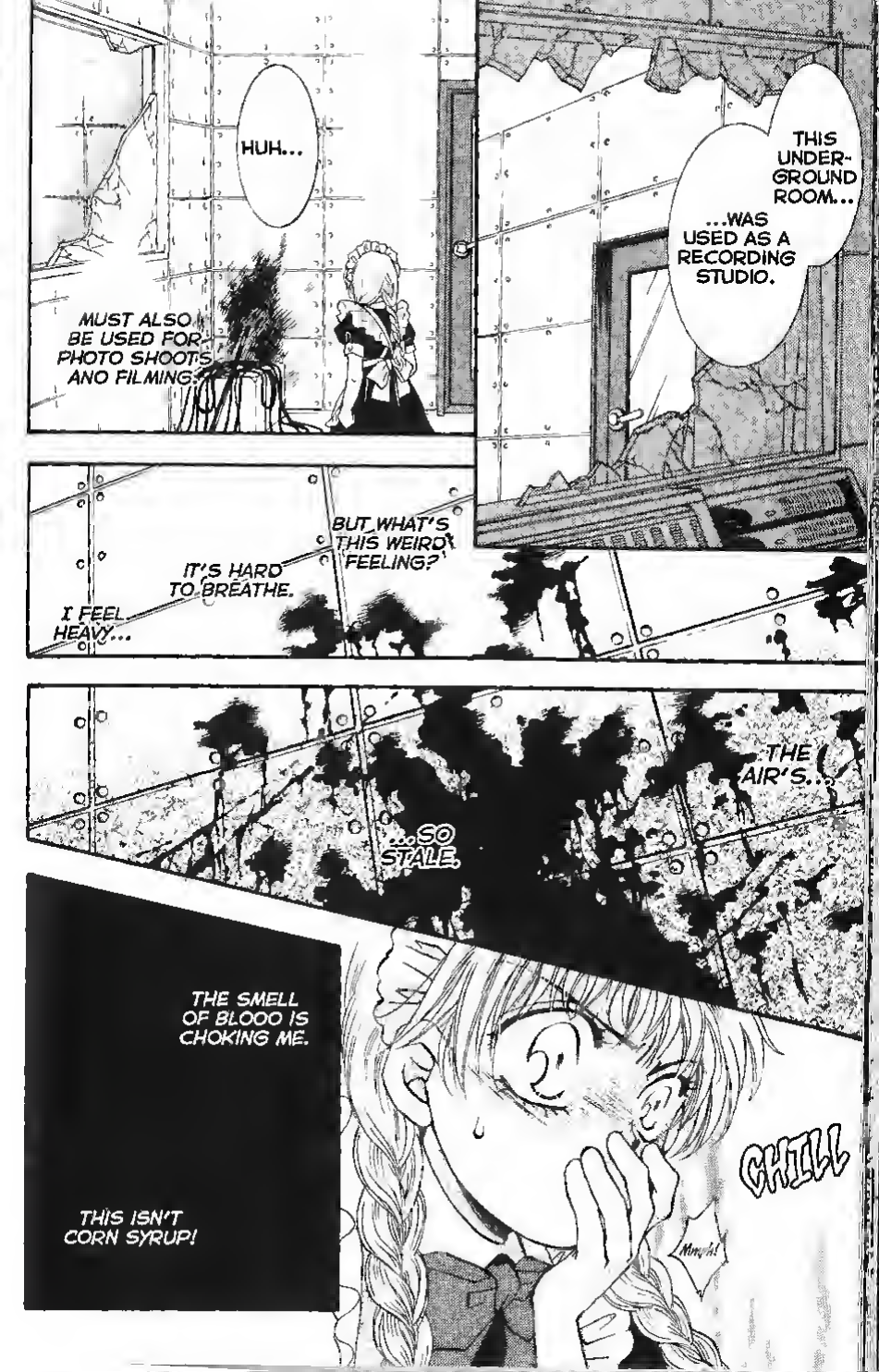
YOU IDIOT!!
YOU ACTUALLY THOUGHT...
...WE WERE SHDOTING A SNUFF FILM!?
WE ALMDST HAD THAT SHOT!!
WHEN YDU PANICKED, YDU MESSED UP DUR SET!
Plastic knife
Corn syrup blood
I KNOW.
YOU CAN PAY US BACK BY PLAYING THE PART, INSTEAD.
YEAH, LET'S DD THAT!
CHILD VICTIMS IN SLASHER FILMS ARE HOT NOW.
Ha ha ha...
I'M SEVENTEEN YEARS DLD! I WOULDN'T FILL THAT NICHE AT ALL!!
AH! HOLD IT!!
DASH!

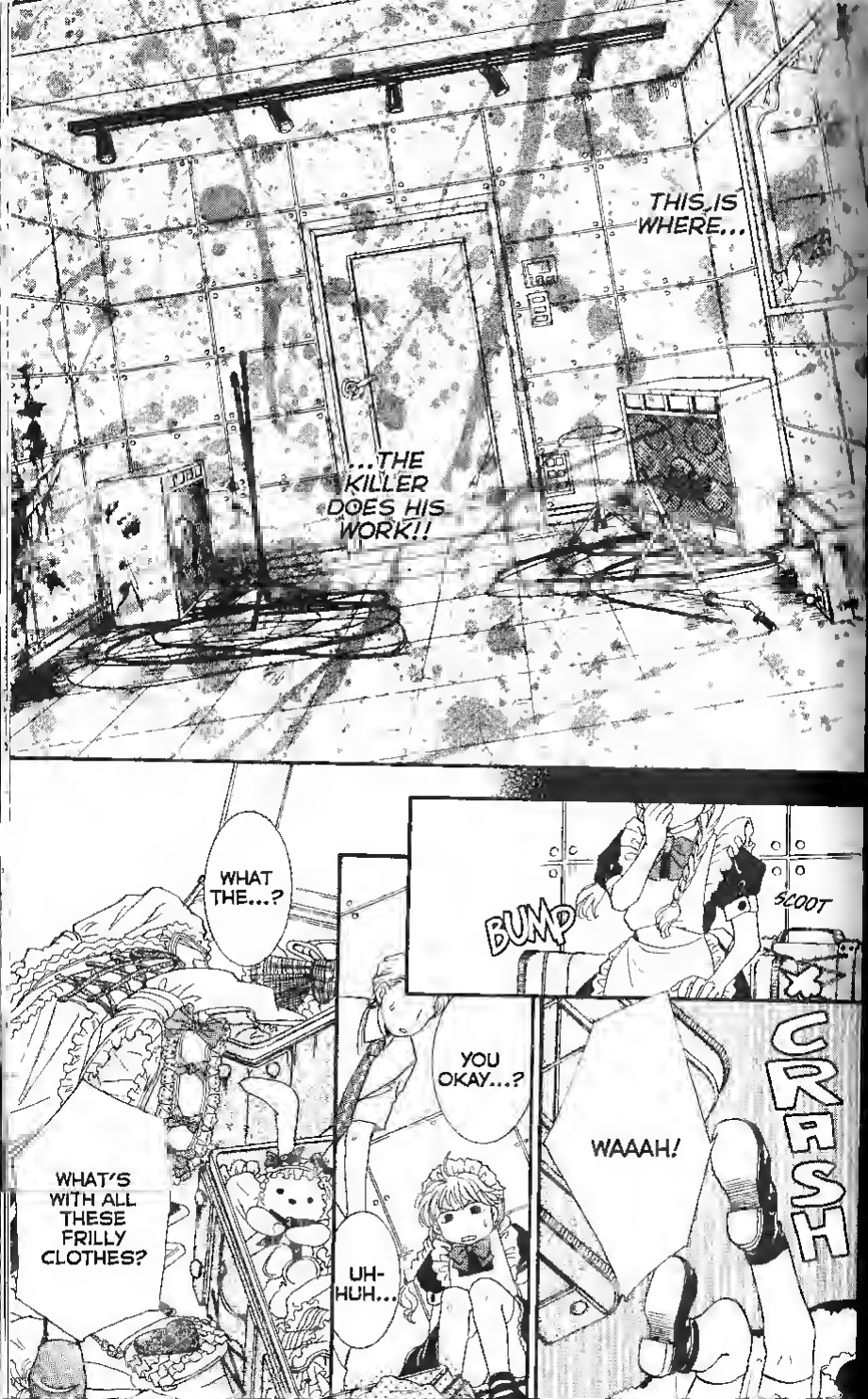

.....
Where'd she go!?
Damn!
TMP
TMP
ARE THEY GONE?
LOOKS LIKE IT.
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

I DON'T THINK THEY WERE THE KILLERS...

KILLERS ?
Oh! Never mind, I'm just talking to myself.
ANYWAY... WHERE ARE WE?

THANKS, MIYAHARA-SAN. YOU REALLY SAVED ME.
Phew...


HUH...
MUST ALSO BE USED FOR PHOTO SHOOTS AND FILMING.
THIS UNDER-GROUND ROOM...
...WAS USED AS A RECORDING STUDIO.
BUT WHAT'S THIS WEIRD FEELING?
IT'S HARD TO BREATHE.
I FEEL HEAVY...
THE AIR'S...?
...SO STALE.
THE SMELL OF BLOOD IS CHOKING ME.
THIS ISN'T CORN SYRUP!
CHILL
Mm...!


THIS IS WHERE...
...THE KILLER DOES HIS WORK!!
BUMP
SCOOT
CRASH
WHAT THE...?
YOU OKAY...?
WAAAH!
UH-HUH...
WHAT'S WITH ALL THESE FRILLY CLOTHES?

THIS MUST BE...
...THE KILLER'S!!
FLUFF
THAT MEANS THE KILLER'S REAL HAIR ISN'T THAT LONG-
A WIG!?

MIYA...
HUH...?
CLUB
FAINT
...HARA...

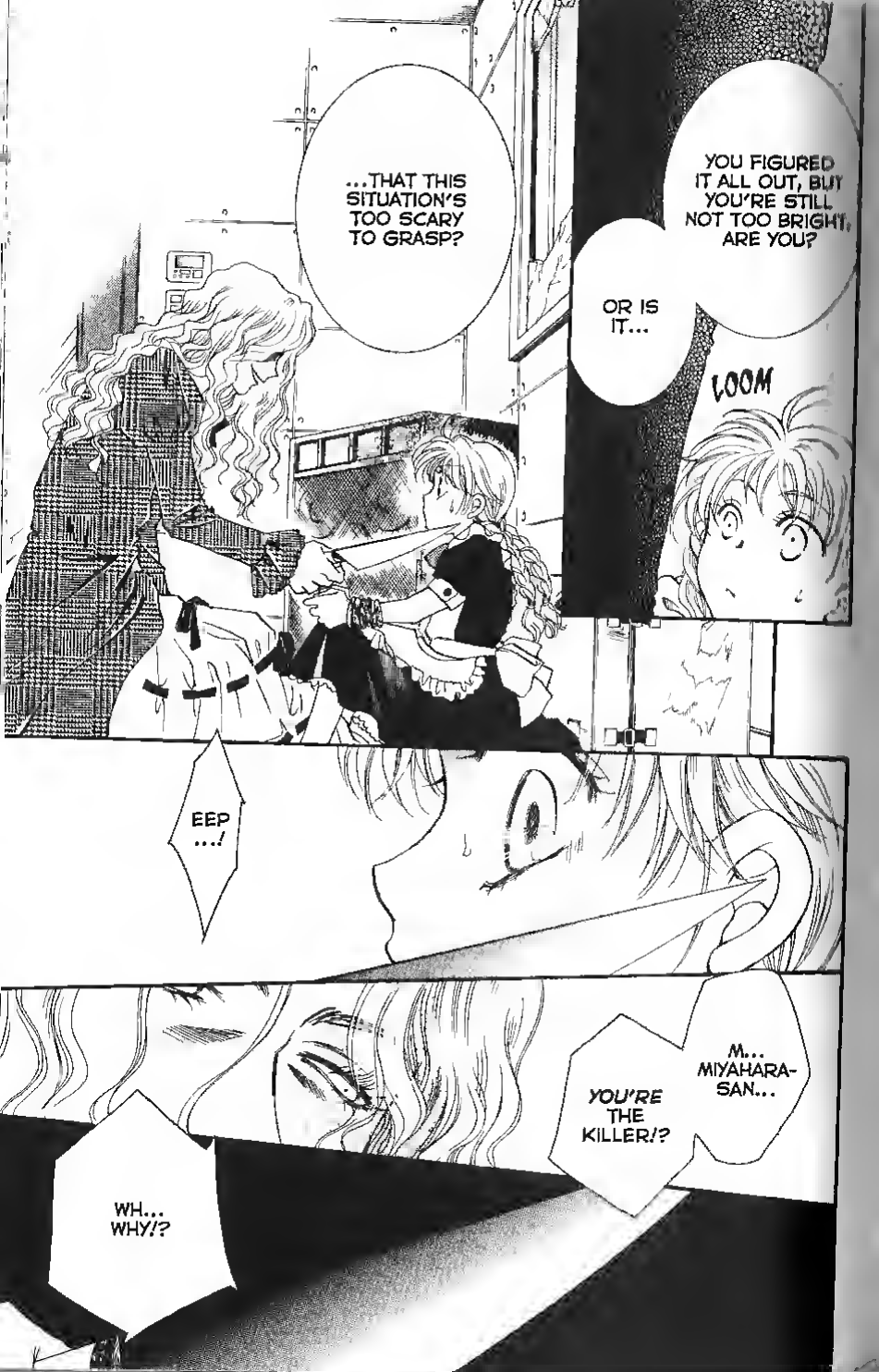
COP
WELL, WELL, WELL.
STRETCH
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
OW OW OW OW!!

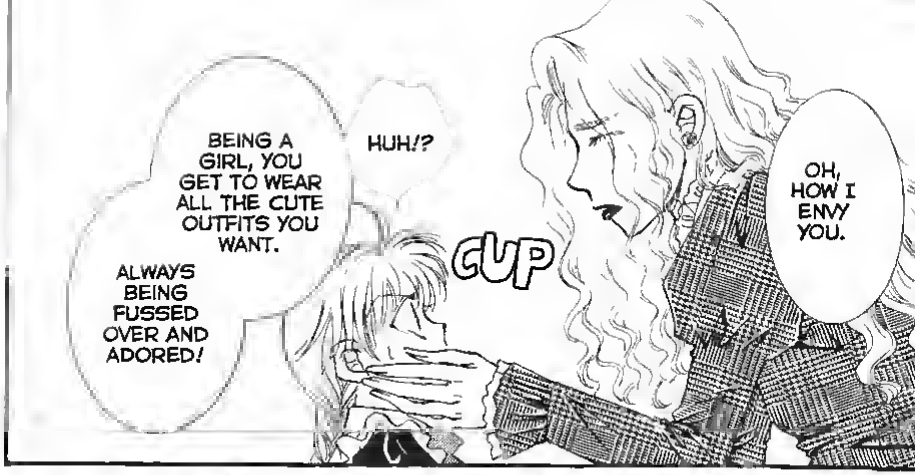
A... AYA-NII!?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE!?
YOU REALLY DON'T THINK...
...I KNOW HOW YOUR MINDS WORK?
Got me there.
Ooooh! Another hottie!
I RE-SEARCHED THE PAST MURDER VICTIMS...
...AND LEARNED THAT THE FIRST ONE HAD BEEN SCOUTED HERE.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE SECOND ONE, BUT...
...ONE THING'S FOR SURE: SHE WAS A BEAUTY.
THERE'S NO DOUBT SHE WAS APPROACHED HERE.
ALSO ...
THE AGENCY THAT SCOUTED THE FIRST GIRL...
...HAD AN EMPLOYEE QUIT JUST BEFORE HER MURDER.
THAT MUST BE THAT LONG-HAIRED WOMAN WE SAW!
NO, IT WAS A MAN.

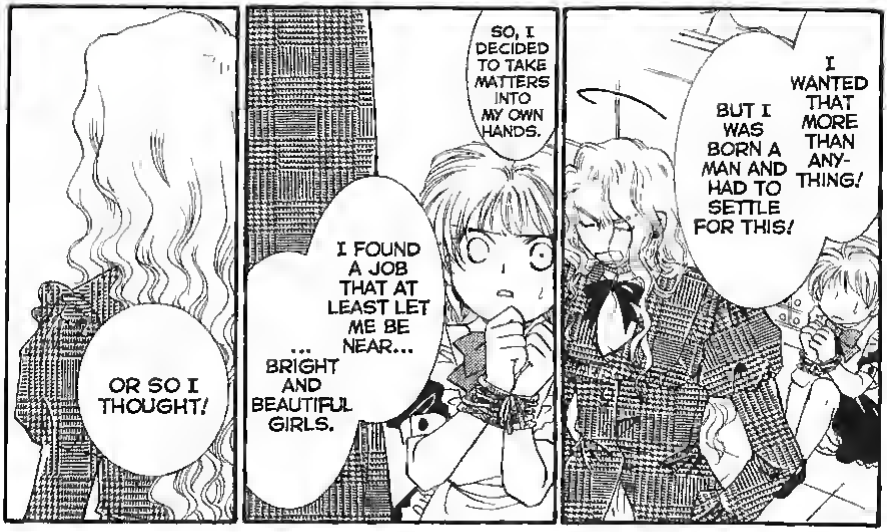
BY THE WAY...
WHERE'S OUR LITTLE PRINCESS?
...HAD "PECULIAR" HOBBIES.
APPARENTLY, THAT EMPLOYEE...
SHE CALLED ME TO SAY SHE'D BE WAITING HERE, BUT...
...IT'S BEEN OVER AN HOUR.
BEATS ME.
They came to me!
So, you decided to pick up some girls instead?
.....
...SHE'S PROBABLY GOTTEN HERSELF INTO A MESS OF TROUBLE, AS USUAL.
KNOWING THAT LITTLE HELL-RAISER ...

NAAAAAAH!
Ha ha ha!
NN...
AWWW, DID I WAKE YOU UP?

JUMP
!!
WH...
WHAT'S GOING ON!?
WHY'RE YOU...
...DRESSED LIKE THAT?
MIYAHARA-SAN!?


...THAT THIS SITUATION'S TOO SCARY TO GRASP?
YOU FIGURED IT ALL OUT, BUT YOU'RE STILL NOT TOO BRIGHT, ARE YOU?
OR IS IT...
LOOM
EEP ...!
M... MIYAHARA-SAN...
YOU'RE THE KILLER!?
WH... WHY!?

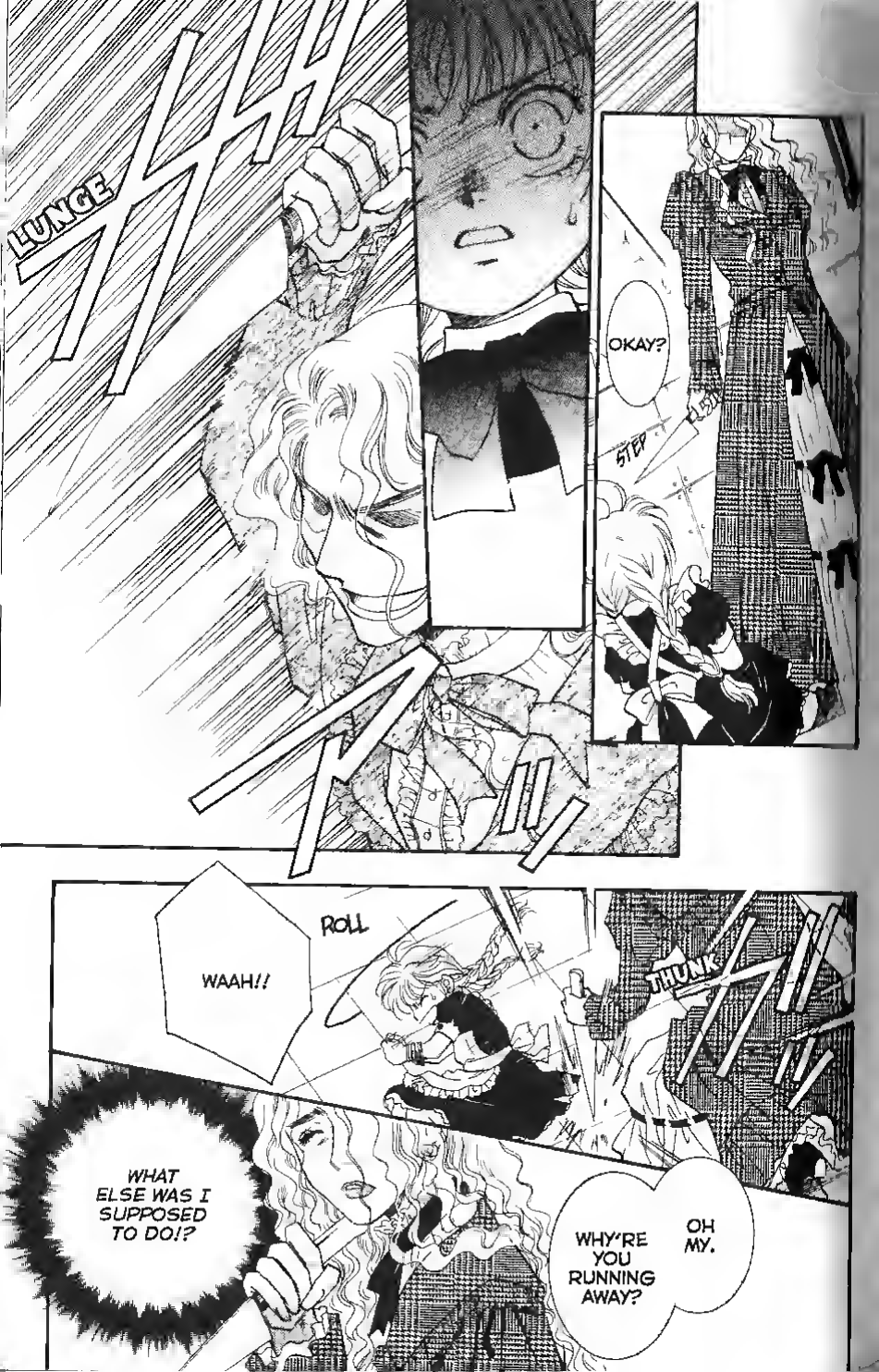

OH, HOW I ENVY YOU.
CUP
HUH!?
BEING A GIRL, YOU GET TO WEAR ALL THE CUTE OUTFITS YOU WANT.
ALWAYS BEING FUSSED OVER AND ADORED!


I WANTED THAT MORE THAN ANY-THING!
BUT I WAS BORN A MAN AND HAD TO SETTLE FOR THIS!
SO, I DECIDED TO TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS.
I FOUND A JOB THAT AT LEAST LET ME BE NEAR... ... BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL GIRLS.
OR SO I THOUGHT!

EVEN IF THEY STARTED OUT BEAUTIFUL...
...THEY ALL TURNED INTO UGLY HAGS!

UGH! WHY'RE YOU WEARING THAT!?
YOU CAN'T CROSS-DRESS, YOU FREAK!
AND THE THINGS THEY'D SAY...
WHEN I'D FIRST SCOUT THE GIRLS...
...THEY'D BE THE PUREST, DAINTIEST THINGS YOU EVER SAW.
BUT THE INDUSTRY TURNED THEM SOUR AND UGLY.
THEIR BEAUTY, KEPT SAFE FOREVER...
I'D LET THEM LIVE ON, WITHIN ME.
I DECIDED TO TAKE CARE OF THEM BEFORE THE WORLD STOLE THEIR BEAUTY.
THAT'S WHEN MY PLAN BEGAN TO FORM.

CUTE
SEE?
THIS WAY, I CAN PRESERVE THEM AT THEIR MOST BEAUTIFUL.
IT'S BLOOD!!
I DRINK IT EVERY SINGLE DAY.
THIS IS SO AWFUL!
HE'S BAD NEWS...
THAT SHOULD MAKE ME BEAUTIFUL, TOO, DON'T YOU AGREE?
REALLY BAD NEWS!
HE'S OUT OF HIS MIND!!
I LURED YOU DOWN HERE JUST TO KEEP YOU QUIET.
BUT YOU'RE SO CUTE, I THINK I'LL PRESERVE YOU, TOO.
HUH!? NO THANKS, PLEASE!!

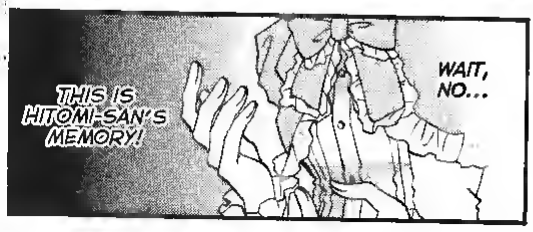

LUNGE
OKAY?
STEP
ROLL
WAAH!!
THUNK
OH MY.
WHY'RE YOU RUNNING AWAY?
WHAT ELSE WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO!?

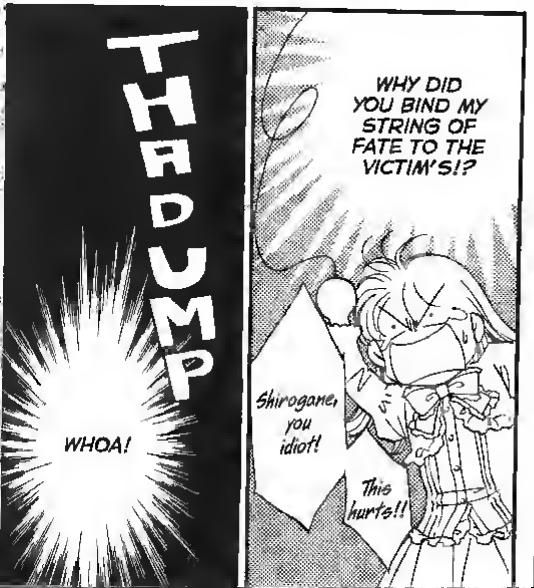
I HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING!
HOW DO I GET OUT OF THIS!?
SHI...
SHI...
SHIROGANE!!
FLASH

!?
FOOO

HUH!?
FWOOSH
WH...WHAT WAS THAT!?
MY NECK HURTS SO MUCH!
SMEAR
THROB
Aah!

DID I...
...GET KILLED!?
DOOM
Bound Beauty— THE END!
Thanks for reading!


THIS IS HITOMI-SAN'S MEMORY!
WAIT, NO...


THUMP
WHOA!
WHY DID YOU BIND MY STRING OF FATE TO THE VICTIM'S!?
Shirogane, you idiot!
This hurts!!

BLOOD!?

THIS REALLY HURTS A LOT!
OW! OW!!
NO... I'M SCARED!
SOMETHING'S...
I'M SCARED!
HELP ME! I'M SCARED!!

SLAP
Huh?
WHAT...
...IS THAT?

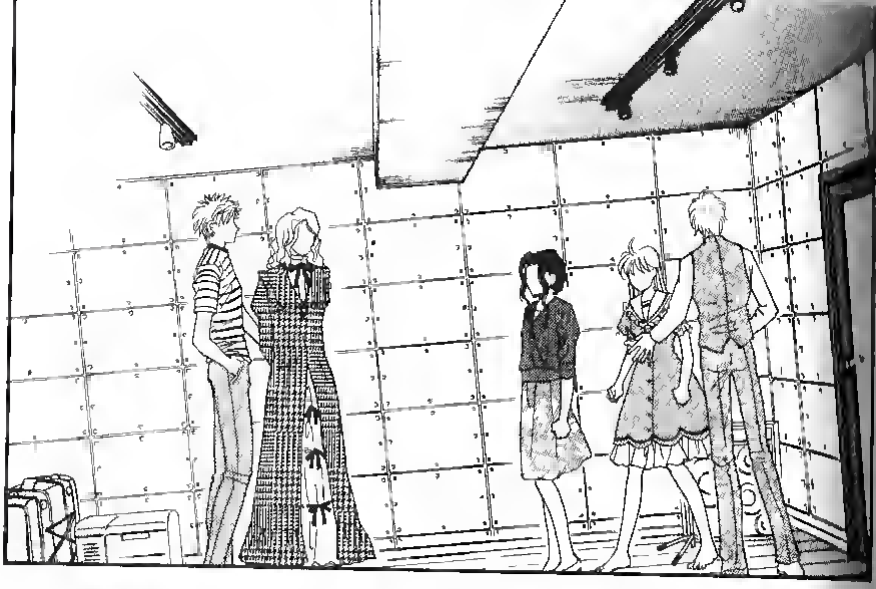
AYA-SAN!?
Was ready for a second shot
Darn, she woke up on the first try.
YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO GET YOURSELF IN A PICKLE, DON'T YOU?
Ow ow ow!
WAY TO GO.
What're you doing to me!?
WHEN WE FINALLY TRACKED YOU DOWN... ... YOU WERE ABOUT TO BE SKEWERED.
TSUNA!?
JUST NOW, I...
Oh...I'm wearing Miyahara-san's clothes.
Le beau monde
THIS IS...

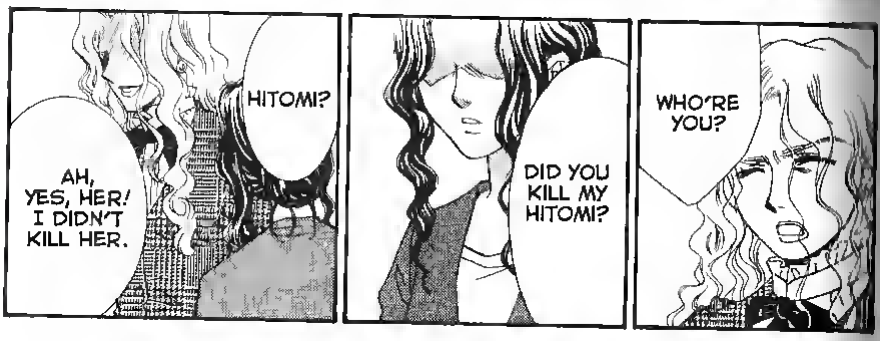
SO, DID YOU MANAGE TO TIE THE STRING OF FATE?
I THINK SO, BUT...
...I'M NOT TOO SURE.
Did you hit your head or something?
Shut up!
You lumping us together!?
FOR SIMPLETONS LIKE YOU ANO TSUNA...
...IT'S A VERY SERIOUS DANGER.
WHEN IT COMES TO BLOOOY MUROER...
...THERE IS NO SOUNO MIND INVOLVEO, NEITHER KILLER'S NOR VICTIM'S.
WHEN TYING THE STRING OF FATE, THE TYER EXPERIENCES THE MEMORIES ANO FEELINGS OF THE VICTIM...
...ANO SUBJECTS HIMSELF TO THE INTENSITY.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
...IT OID FEEL LIKE I WAS HEAOEO FOR SOMETHING REALLY RISKY.

BUT WOULDN'T YOU BE IN THE SAME DANGER, AYA-SAN?
I'D BE FINE.
NO MATTER HOW TRAGIC THE INCIDENT, MY HEART FEELS NO PAIN.
I DON'T PROCESS CONCEPTS LIKE LOVE AND HATE, NOR DO I CARE TO.
ANY HEART THAT MIGHT HAVE FELT SUCH THINGS...
...WAS LOST A LONG TIME AGO.

THAT WAS THE PRICE I PAID FOR MY SHARE OF THE FIVE COLORED THREADS.
...YOUR HEART?
YOU LOST...
Just know that I have no feelings.
THAT'S A SECRET. ♡
BUT... HOW!?
YOU CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE, MISS.
CREAK
!
...THE WORLD FROM A FAR CALMER PLACE.
THAT'S WHY I CAN SEE...
I CAN'T GET CARRIED AWAY BY MY EMOTIONS, AND I CAN'T FEEL GUILT.
ACTUALLY, I FIND IT RATHER CONVE-NIENT.

KUDO-SAN!?
WHY DID YOU BRING HER HERE!?
I'M JUST DOING MY JOB.
CLIK
CLIK
CLIK
BUT...!
PASS



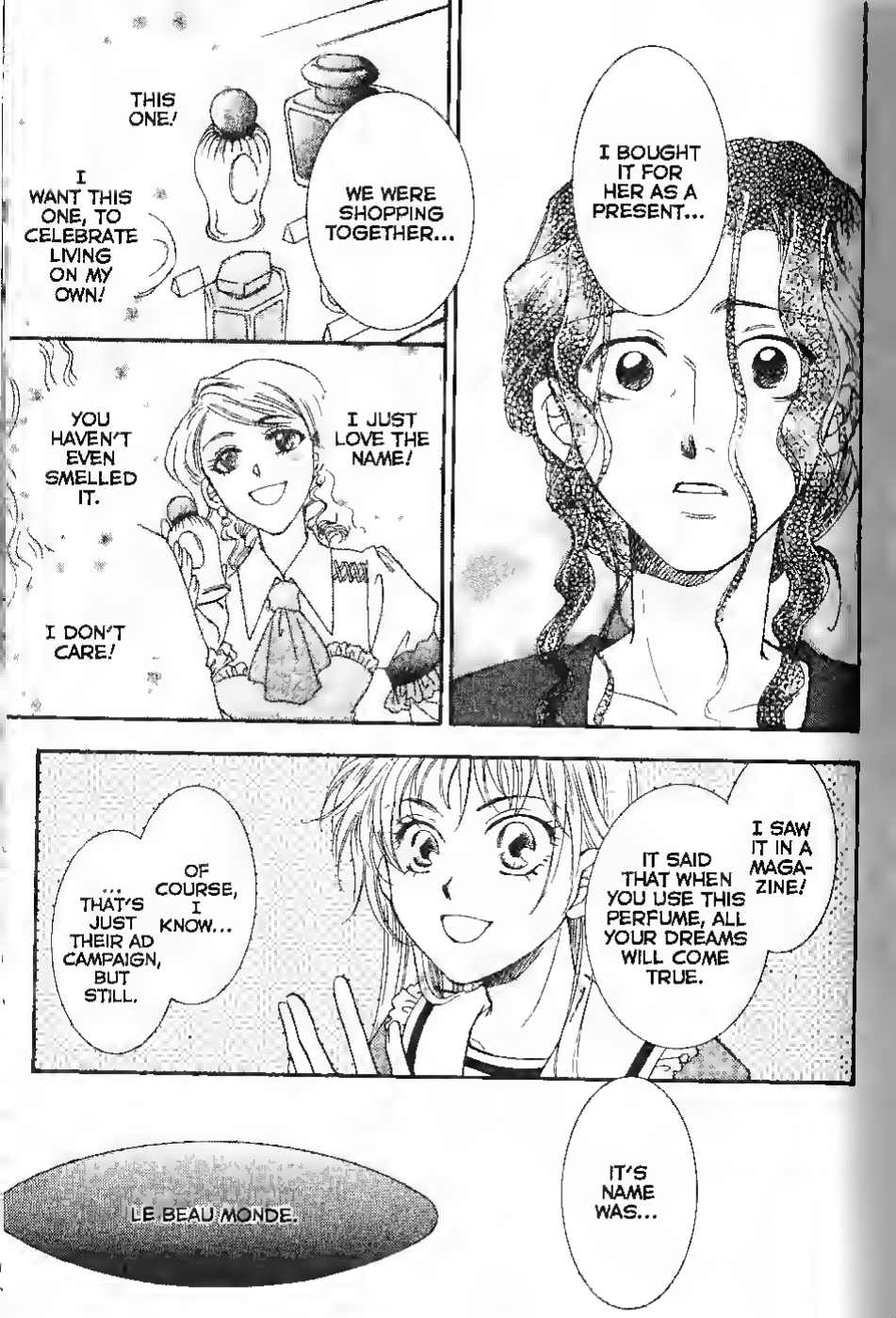

HITOMI?
AH, YES, HER! I DIDN'T KILL HER.
DID YOU KILL MY HITOMI?
WHO'RE YOU?

I MERELY SAVED HER FROM BEING STAINED BY THIS UGLY WORLD.
SHE LIVES ON INSIDE ME, FOREVER PURE.
FOREVER BEAUTI-FUL...

AVENG-ING HITOMI!
WH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
SWISH
AAH!!
CHARGE
STOP !!
NO!!
SLICE
I CAN'T STAND BY AND LET THIS HAPPEN.
I KNOW HER SISTER'S UPSET.
BUT THIS CAN'T BE THE KIND OF WORLD HITOMI-SAN WANTED!
AND I PROBABLY CAN'T CHANGE THAT.

Le beau monde
THE KIND OF WORLD...
...HITOMI-SAN WANTED...?
GO ROT...
...IN HELL!!
LUNGE

CHIKO!?
DON'T TRY TO STOP ME!
I'M NOT!
BUT, BEFORE YOU TAKE YOUR REVENGE ...
...PLEASE THINK OF HITOMI-SAN'S FEELINGS.
SHOW
HITOMI...?
THAT...
...PERFUME!


THIS ONE!
I WANT THIS ONE, TO CELEBRATE LIVING ON MY OWN!
WE WERE SHOPPING TOGETHER...
I BOUGHT IT FOR HER AS A PRESENT...
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN SMELLED IT.
I JUST LOVE THE NAME!
I DON'T CARE!
I SAW IT IN A MAGAZINE!
IT SAID THAT WHEN YOU USE THIS PERFUME, ALL YOUR DREAMS WILL COME TRUE.
OF COURSE, I KNOW...
... THAT'S JUST THEIR AD CAMPAIGN, BUT STILL.
IT'S NAME WAS...
LE BEAU MONDE.

FRENCH FOR "A BEAUTIFUL WORLD."
I KNOW HER DREAMS WERE SHATTERED, BUT...
HITOMI-SAN LOVED BEAUTIFUL THINGS.
SHE WANTED TO BE BEAUTIFUL, TOO.
AND SHE HAD BEAUTIFUL DREAMS FOR THIS WORLD.

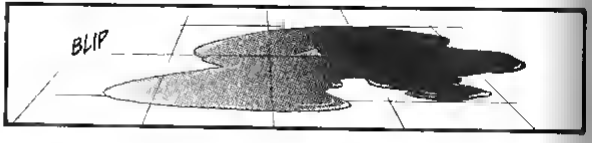
CLATTER
HITOMI ...?
FAZE
FAZE
THAT WAS HOW SHE SAW LIFE.
...FOR HER BELOVED OLDER SISTER...
...I'M SURE SHE WANTED ONLY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WORLD.
HITO ...
...MI...

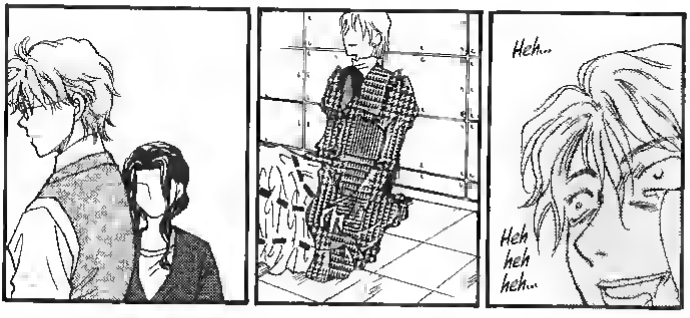
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?
!
I told you to keep an eye on him!
Sorry.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ME!?

SNAP
KOKURYU.
DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH ARGUING WITH SCUM LIKE HIM.
IN YOUR DREAMS, FREAK!
YOU'RE ALL JUST JEALOUS OF MY GOOD LOOKS.
OH, I GET IT.
RAVEL
!?
BLOOP
WHAT'S THIS THREAD!?
WH... WHAT'S HAPPENING!?

BETWEEN THE STRINGS OF YOUR VICTIMS' HEARTBREAK...
...AND THE UNBREAKABLE STRING OF KARMA.
JUST TIED YOUR STRINGS OF FATE.
WH... WHAT IS THIS!?
SINK
!?
SINK
WHAT DID YOU DO!?

NOOOOO!


BLIP


Heh..
Heh heh heh..

I'M SORRY!
FOR WHAT I SAID EARLIER.
CALLING YOU HEART-LESS...
YOU TRIED TO KEEP TSUNA AND ME FROM HAVING TO SUFFER THAT HORRIBLE SCENE.
YOU DIDN'T WANT US TO GET HURT.
YOU TRIED TO PROTECT US, ALL BY YOURSELF.
YOU MUST HAVE FEELINGS.
I THINK YOU'RE WRONG!
I'm quite literally heart-less.
OH, THAT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE FEELINGS YOU CAN HURT.

I THINK THAT COUNTS AS...
...FEELING KINDESS TOWARDS US.
!
I ONLY DIO THAT ...TO AVOIO ALL THE TROUBLE IT'D BRING.
CALCULATING
I'm positive of that.
THE WAY MY FEELINGS GET SO STIRRED UP...
STILL...
...MIGHT BE CAUSEO BY INHERIT-ING THE FIVE COLORED THREAO.
INCLUD-ING THE IRRI-TATION...

...AND ALL THE OTHER FEELINGS.
YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT, CHIKO-CHAN.
AFTER ALL, WHEN I LOOK AT YOU...
...I JUST CAN'T FIGHT THE URGE TO TORMENT YOU!!
GIDDY
GIDDY
And another thing, our slave contract's still in effect, clear?
You really are a heartless sadist!

OFF RECORDING #1

To those I'm seeing again and those who are new, hello! This is volume 2 of "Bound Beauty".

Since volume 1 was compiled so quickly from the magazine, it feels like I've made you wait a whole lot longer for volume 2. Wait...what's that you say? You weren't waiting at all!?

The front cover of this volume is pretty static, and focuses on Chiko. A cover featuring Aya would have been more appropriate for such a static composition. But since his main color theme is black and his personality is far more insane and twisted, my editor told me that putting him on the cover of the second volume would kill the series' sales, for sure. As for Akeo-san, since he's also simpler and more reserved, he's being pushed to the next volume's cover.

When one applies the legend of the Four Guardians of the Night Sky* to the Five Elements system, the element of Earth is associated with the Gold Dragon guardian of the center. However, he's not very visually distinctive as to distinguish him from the more well-known Blue Dragon, so he's often replaced with the Kirin. This story follows that belief system, as you can see in Hirotsuna's tattoos.

This second volume is far more gory than the first. Well, that's the times we live in, I guess. My mango always have a tendency to wreak havoc like that. Like Godzilla does. This would happen while working on my last piece, but every day I walk about, seeing things as places that would work great for a battle, or objects that look like they'd be fun destroying. I swear, I've gotten used to being told that I don't write typical shojo manga stories!

The first half of this volume, the Fourth and Fifth Bindings, mainly focus on Aya. When I was first thinking up cases for the Tyers, I gravitated towards these crime-solving kinds most. I was lucky to get to write exactly what I wanted in them.

As for the frills that dominated these pages, there were so many, my assistants ended up in tears more than once. It's a principle rule in maid outfits that the skirt has to come below the knee.

*See Translator's Notes

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ᑲᓇᐅᑉᐱᐊᓂᒃᑳᓂᒃ

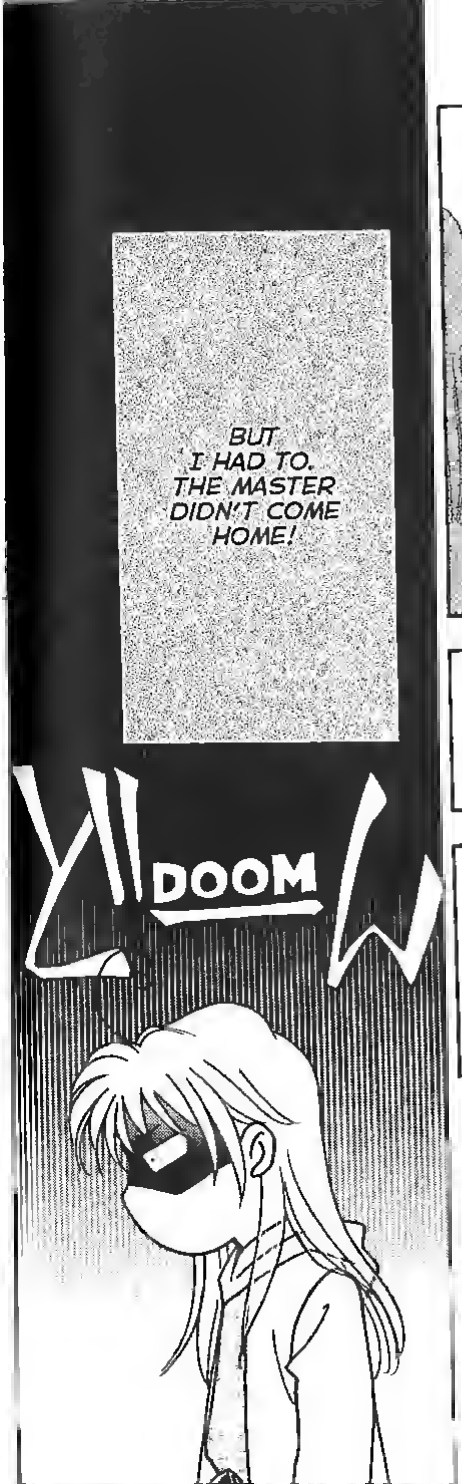
CRASH
HEY... YOU SURE IT'S OKAY TO SCRAP THIS STONE LANTERN, TOO?
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT'S ONE MORE LANTERN? THEY'RE ALL THE SAME.
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
Heh heh.

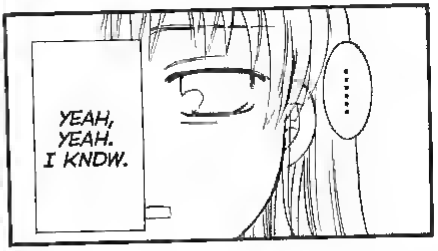
Sixth Binding

第六の封

Sixth Binding
縛りの陸

WE'RE GOING OUT ON A CASE.
NOW THEN...
UH-HUUUUUUH...
Fever Patch
DROOP
AT LEAST I DIDN'T CATCH THE JERK VIRUS.
GRR!
I WARNED YOU THAT YOU'D CATCH A COLD.
IRK
COMBINED WITH YOUR HALLWAY PACING LAST NIGHT, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THIS COMING!
YOU KNOW HOW WEAK YOU GET AFTER USING SHIROGANE.
Ah-choo!





EVERY TIME I SPIN SHIRDGANE, IT DRAINS ME.

AND CHECKING THE FRONT DOOR ALL LAST NIGHT DIDN'T HELP MUCH, EITHER.

DIZZY
STILL!! I CAN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT IT!!
AAARGH!
I GUESS I SHOULD EXPECT HIM TO SPEND A COUPLE NIGHTS A WEEK AT HIS GIRLFRIEND'S.
PLOD
AND HE DOESN'T HAVE TO LET ME KNOW.
PLOD
IT'S SHIROGANE.
WHAT'S MAKING MY INSIDES ALL TOPSY TURVY...
...MIGHT NOT BE A VIRUS AT ALL.
THEY CALL IT A SACRED TREASURE.
AND I KNOW IT'S REALLY VALUABLE.
EVEN IF IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...
...IS IT RIGHT FOR ME TO POSSESS IT?
THEN, HOW ABOUT I TAKE IT BACK?
HUH?

STAB
MASTER!?

!!
SNIFF
WHAT'S THAT SMELL?
NO!!
NO!
MY BODY'S BURNING UP!
NOOO!!
IT SMELLS SO BAD! THIS REEK...!
PLEASE, NO...!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE THIS WAY!
IF YOU TAKE IT FROM ME, I'LL DIE!!
IT...
...STIIIIINKS!!
JUMP

YOU MUSTN'T GET UP TOO QUICKLY IN YOUR STATE.
HUH?
I FOUND YOU COLLAPSED BY THE FRONT DOOR.
!?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'D GO OUT AND LEAVE A SICK CHILD HOME ALONE.
BUT, I MUST SAY!
THAT IS FAR TOO IRRESPONSIBLE OF AYA-SAN AND HIRO-TSUNA-SAN.
TO GET TO THE POINT...
WHO IS THIS PRETTY LADY!?
OFFER
HERE, DRINK THIS.
IT'S A MEDICAL BLEND I MADE.
DRINK IT UP.
STIIINK
That explains the smell from my dream...

BOW BOW
OH! NICE TO MEET YOU, I'M CHIYAKO GOTO!
BOW SPLAT
FORGIVE ME FOR NOT INTRODUCING MYSELF SOONER. MY NAME IS ISORA SAKURAGI.
UM... EXCUSE ME, BUT WHO...?
OH, YES!
HUH?
ISN'T AKEO-SAN BACK YET?
WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH THE TYERS?
UH, SO...
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU AND THE MASTER ...?
H-H-HOLD ON A MINUTE ...
YOU MEAN ...
THIS MORNING!?
THAT'S ODD.
WE BOTH LEFT AT THE SAME TIME THIS MORNING...
Say what!?
IT CAN'T BE...
TH-TH-THEN ...
... LAST NIGHT ...
THIS WOMAN IS...
...YOU TWO WERE TOGETHER ...!?

GOD, HOW CAN YOU BE SO CRUEL?
...THE MASTER'S DESTINED LOVE!?
YES, I WAS WITH HIM THE WHOLE TIME.
SHE'S GOT BEAUTY, SHE'S KIND, AND SHE'S DILIGENT!
SMILE
SHE'S THE IDEAL WOMAN!!
SHE'S A PERFECT MATCH FOR HIM!!

PERFOR-MANCE HALL?
BY NOW, AKEO-SAN ...
...MUST ALREADY BE HEADED FOR THE PERFOR-MANCE HALL.
OH NO!
IT'S ALMOST TIME.
YOU'RE KIDDING ME! THEY HAVE A DATE TODAY!?
HE PROMISED TO COME TO THE RECITAL.
IRK
UM...
I WISH I COULD COME, TOO...
Hee hee!
BUT AREN'T YOU SICK?
GULP
GULP
MM-HM! I FEEL BETTER ALREADY!!
THAT MEDICINE REALLY HIT THE SPOT!
You're tearing up though...

YAAAY!!
WELL, IF YOU INSIST...
I'M READY FOR WHATEVER AWAITS ME.
WORRYING LIKE THIS WILL ONLY MAKE ME SICKER.
I HAVE TO FIND OUT THE STORY BETWEEN THESE TWO, NO MATTER WHAT!!

THIS FAMILY-RUN HOTEL...
...IS FAMOUS FOR ITS UPSCALE STYLE AND QUALITY.
Very high society
AYA-SAN!?
OH MY! IT'S BEEN SO LONG.
HUH?
CHIKO-CHAN?
Ack!
ISORA-CHAN?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT A SILLY QUESTION...

Hosted by the Hotel Grand Royale
A magnificent performance to be put on by...
Isora Sakuragi on the Koto
ISORA-CHAN...
...IS A FAMOUS PERFORMER IN THE MUSICAL WORLD.
SHE'S DONE RECITALS ABROAD AND PUT OUT SEVERAL CDS.
YOU'RE KIDDING ME...
Well, what do you expect?
SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF A PRESTIGIOUS FAMILY IN KYOTO.
SHE'S REFINED AND MUSICALLY TALENTED.
Still rehearsing

I CAN'T COMPETE WITH HER!!
I can't even enter the ring!
AND HERE I AM, STUCK IN THIS CHILD'S BODY...
...DEPENDING ON EVERYONE ELSE WHILE I JUST CAUSE TROUBLE!
NOT ONLY IS SHE BEAUTIFUL AND GOOD-NATURED...
...BUT SHE'S A TALENTED NOBLEWOMAN.
SHE'S LIKE A GODDESS!!
HUH!?
AH! THERE'S AKEO-SAN.
MAS--
GASP!
MASTER!!

TURN
TMP TMP TMP
.....
AKEO-SAN!
!!!

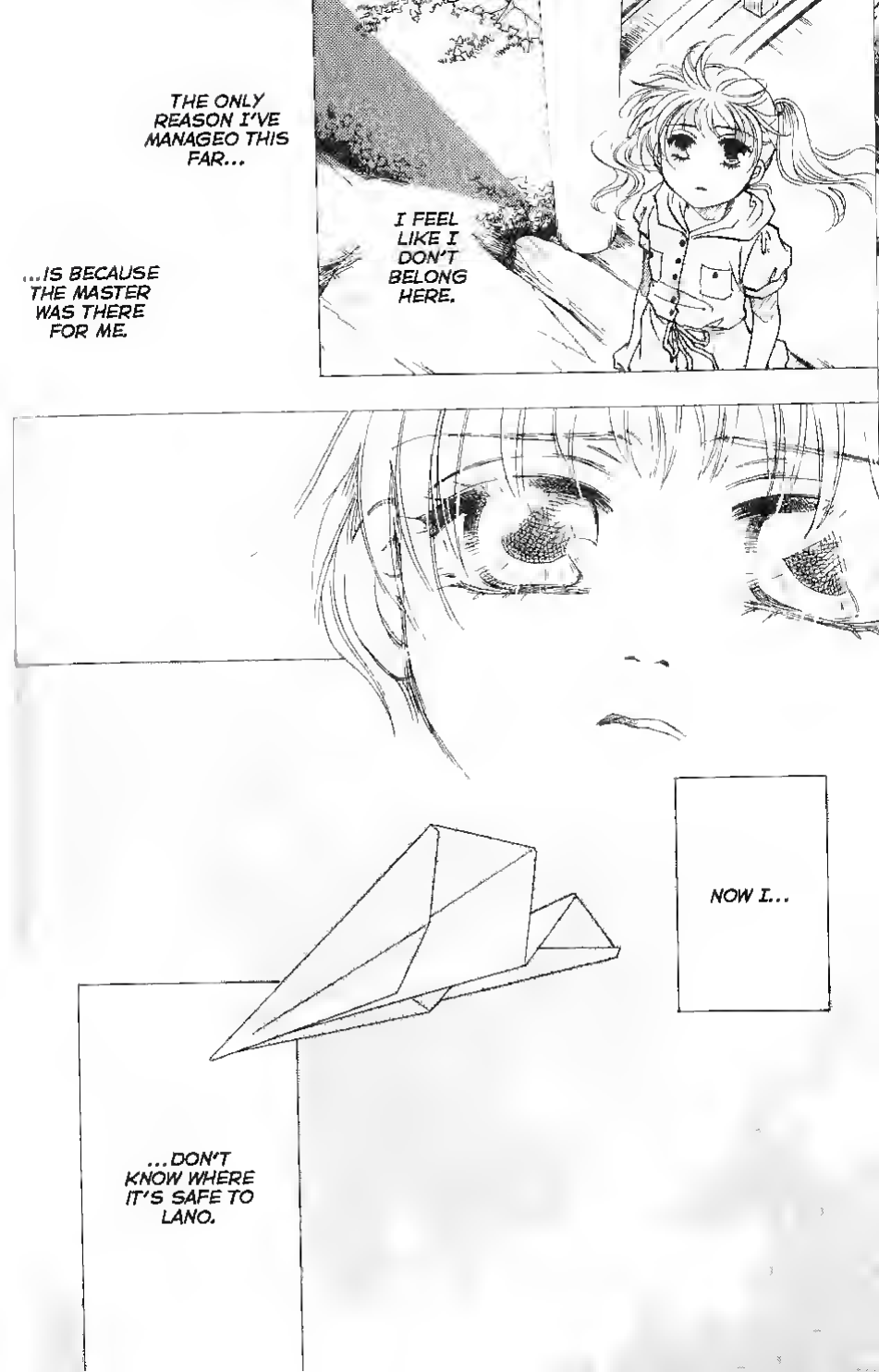
IF THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY ASKED YOU OUT BY NAME, THEN...
...IT MUST BE ABOUT THE SHIROGANE MATTER, RIGHT?
IT'S BEEN SO LONG, HOW'S THE MAIN BRANCH HOLDING UP?
WHAT HAVE THEY DECIDED TO DO ABOUT CHIKO-CHAN?

VROOOOOM!
WHOA!
CRASH
TMP
TMP
TMP
YANK
HUH!?
TMP
TMP
OW...
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
Here you go.

I KNOW ...
I THOUGHT WE...
...TOLD YOU TO GO TO BED!
TSUNA!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LISTEN TO THE CONCERT?
I'm not really into classical music.
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO LISTEN TO HER PLAY.
DID YOU GUYS ALREADY FINISH?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU HAD WORK, DIDN'T YOU?
NOT YET.
NO.

THIS LOCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN...
...A POWERFUL MAGNET FOR EARTH SPIRITS.
THE SAME FAMILY'S OWNED THE PROPERTY FOR GENERATIONS. THEY SAY THE FIRST OWNER...
...BUILT A HOTEL THAT SUCCEEDED BECAUSE HE RESPECTED THE EARTH.
THE CURRENT OWNER'S MORE OF A MODERN ENTRE-PRENEUR.
HE'S TEARING UP THE LAND WITH DEVELOP-MENT...
...AND THE HEAD CONTRACTOR ACCIDENTALLY DESTROYED A PIVOTAL STONE LANTERN.
EVER SINCE THEN, THERE'VE BEEN ACCIDENTS AROUND THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.
We knew it was a job for us Tyers.
MORE AND MORE GUESTS HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING OF GHOST SIGHTINGS.
AN OLD EARTH SPIRIT ... ...IS DEFINITELY ON THE LOOSE.
AYA-NII SAYS WE COULD BE IN REAL DANGER ... ...IF WE TRY TO TAKE HIM ON DIRECTLY.

AND I'M ON GUARD TO MAKE SURE NOBODY BREAKS THE BARRIER!
Heh heh!
SO, YOU'RE A WATCH-DOG.
DON'T CALL ME THAT!
VROOOOM!
THAT'S WHY...
...WE'RE JUST SEALING HIM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE, FOR NOW.


THE ONLY REASON I'VE MANAGED THIS FAR...
...IS BECAUSE THE MASTER WAS THERE FOR ME.
I FEEL LIKE I DON'T BELONG HERE.
NOW I...
...DON'T KNOW WHERE IT'S SAFE TO LAND.

TSUNA!
CHIKO-CHAN!
AYA-NII!
AKEO-NII!
/SORA-SAN...
SEEMS WE CAN TIE UP THESE HANGING STRINGS OF FATE FASTER THAN WE THOUGHT.
AKEO-SAN SAID HE'LL HELP US.
I WON'T LET ONE PERSON PASS ME BY!
Hmph!
VROOOOM!
TMP TMP
TMP TMP
HAVE YOU BEEN KEEPING A TIGHT WATCH, TSUNA?
OF COURSE!

GRAB
WAIT! YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE!
WAAAAH!
EEEOOOO!
TRIP
TUG
HUH?
SNAP
KERSPLASH
AAAAAH!!
YOU IDIOT!!
How could you break the seal!?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, YOU MORON !?
Yuck, I swallowed some...
LOOK WHO'S TALKING!
SOMEONE WAS GOING TO BREAK IT, SOONER OR LATER!
CHIYAKO!!
RUSH
I
RIPPLE

...UPSCALE HOTELS FEED THEIR POND FISH REAL WELL.
I... I GUESS ...

SPLASH
EEEEK!!
DIVE
AYA...
WE SHOULD'VE HAD OURSELVES A FISH AND CHIPS NIGHT!
My bad for not seeing that coming.
Aww...
THE SEALED EARTH SPIRIT USED A CARP AS A MEDIUM.
Gaaah! Save meeee!!
!!
WAAAAH!
UH-OH! THE KID!!
ROOOOAR!
WATCH OUT!!

SHIROGANE!
GLEAM
This isn't the best place for that..
Oh, boy...

Fine, take it!
TSUNA!
THROW ME A SHIRT!
WHAT AM I!? YOUR PERSONAL DRESSER!?
!
CHIYA-KO!
STOP!
MASTER ...

AND THIS IS THE ONE THING...
I CAN'T LOOK STUPID IN FRONT OF THE MASTER AGAIN!
DON'T WORRY! I CAN HANDLE THIS!
BING!
...I CAN DO, THAT SHE CAN'T!!
WRAP
SLICE
PLOP

GYAAAAH!!
WHAT THE-!?
WRIGGLE
WRIGGLE
There's more of them!!
SCATTER
WHAT YOU FIRST SAW WAS A GATHERING OF MANY EARTH SPIRITS.
WHAT'S GOING ON!?
SOME-BODY EXPLAIN!!
!?
HISSS!

SLIDE

M... MAS-TER! YOUR ARM!
IT'S NOTHING.
NOW, GET BACK.
R-RIGHT!
OFFER
OH...
THANK YOU, ISORA-SAN.

SUCH POOR WORKMANSHIP.

BUT...
...IS A REMINDER OF YOUR CHILDLIKE VIOLENCE.
RELYING ON BRUTE STRENGTH TO FORCE YOUR OPPONENT DOWN...
I ADMIRE THE INNATE SKILL YOU MUST HAVE.
SPINNING SHIROGANE AS AN UN-TRAINED AMATEUR...
COME AGAIN ...?
UM...
Am I hearing things?
WHIP
WHAT ...!?
RUSTLE
THE WIND...
WHAT WAS THAT...?
HUH!?

DID YOU KNOW?
RUSTLE
THE KOTO IS SAID TO HAVE ORIGINATED FROM THE PLUCKING OF AN ARCHERY BOW'S STRINGS.
THE SOUND OF A PLUCKED BOW STRING ...
... POSSESSED THE POWER TO EXORCISE EVIL SPIRITS.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
THE WIND IS...
... SURROUNDING ISORA-SAN!!

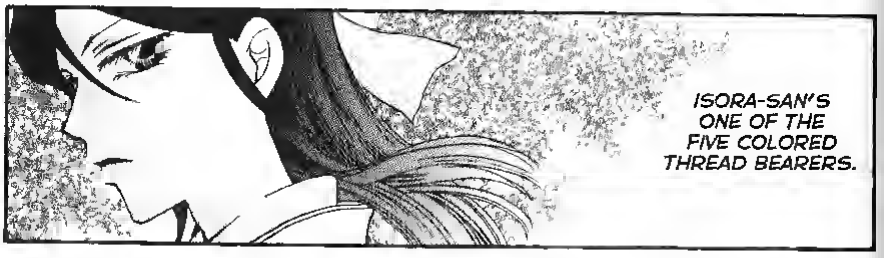
MAY THE CEREMONY COMMENCE.
SEIRAN*.
*See Translator's Notes
WAIT, THOSE ARE THREADS!
IT'S THE BLUE MEMBER...
...OF THE FIVE COLORED THREADS!!

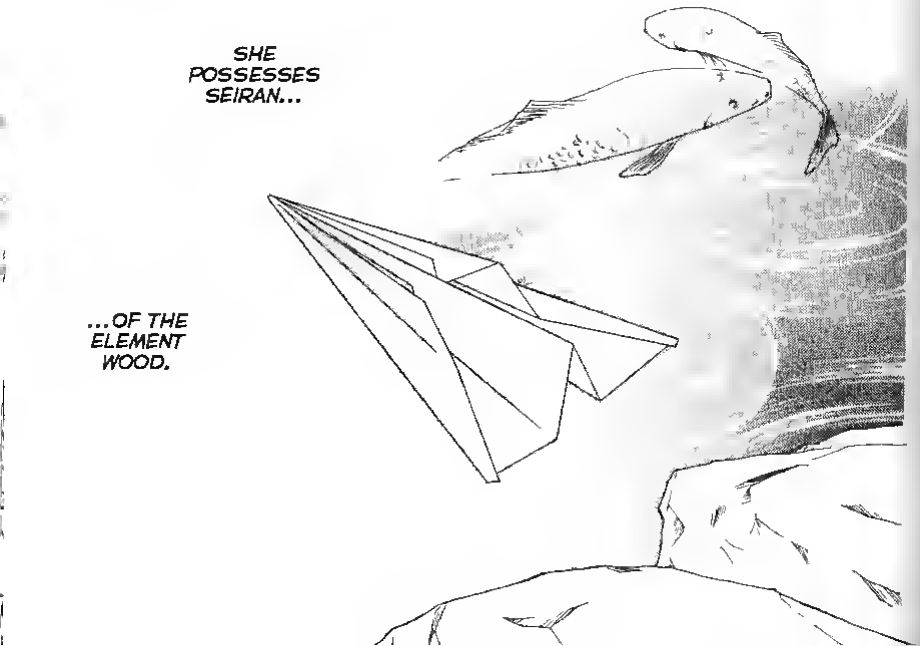
THE SURROUNDING TREES...
...ARE ALL RESONATING WITH THE SOUND OF THE KOTO...
EEEEE
REST IN PEACE ONCE AGAIN.
IT CARRIES WITH IT THE DEVOTION OF THE ANCIENT WHO FIRST CARED FOR YOU.
MAY THE SOUND OF THE WIND GUIDE YOU TO YOUR RESTING PLACE.
OH, MULTITUDE OF SPIRITS WHOSE SLEEP WE HAVE DISTURBED.
VWEEEE
...THE SOUND OF A KOTO!?
IT'S...
VRRR
PLUCK

OH, GREAT STRINGS OF FATE.
I OFFER YOU MY TYING.

THE EARTH SPIRITS...
...HAVE GONE BACK TO WHERE THE STONE LANTERN WAS.
RUSTLE

WHIP
!!
!!!
FLOAT


ISORA-SAN'S ONE OF THE FIVE COLORED THREAD BEARERS.


SHE POSSESSES SEIRAN...
...OF THE ELEMENT WOOD.

I WAS ORDERED BY THE MATRIARCH OF THE FAMILY...
...TO TAKE CHIYAKO-SAN TO THE MAIN BRANCH.
IN TRUTH...
...I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR THE CONCERT.
SHE'S TALKING ABOUT THE TOP AUTHORITY WHO HEADS THE FAMILY!
MATRI-ARCH...?
W-WELL, AYA-SAN SAID YOU WERE CALLED OUT BY YOUR GIRLFRIEND!!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
HUH!?
THE RING-LEADER BEHIND AKEO-SAN'S SUDDEN OUTING THE OTHER DAY. ♡
WEREN'T YOU ON A DATE WITH ISORA-SAN?
B... BUT...

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS MAN...
IRK
WELL, THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY IS A WOMAN...
I just like to joke and call her his "girlfriend".
OH, THAT?
IN ANY CASE!
...I CANNOT ACKNOWLEDGE HER AS A MEMBER OF THE FIVE COLORED THREADS.
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WISH TO PROTECT THIS CHILD, AKEO-SAN, BUT...
YOU'VE INCONVE-NIENCED YOURSELVES LONG ENOUGH...
...FOR THE SAKE OF THIS GIRL.

I WILL TAKE THE SHIROGANE AWAY FROM HER MYSELF.
HUH?
WHAAAAT!?

Seventh Binding

縛りの漆

YOU WANT TO TAKE SHIROGANE AWAY FROM ME...?
THE FIVE COLORED THREADS BIND THEMSELVES TO THE WIELDER'S SOUL.
THEN YOU...
...MEAN...
...YOU DON'T CARE IF I DIE?

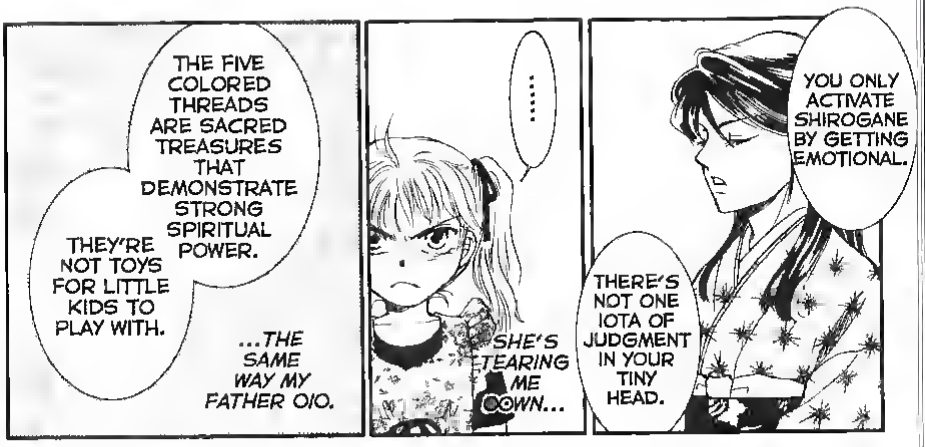
BLUNT
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!?
WHA...!?
CLATTER
I'M JUST JOKING.
PRECISELY.
Isora-chan never sounds like she's joking.
Whoa, little lady.
Lemme at her! She's dead!!
MORE ACCU-RATELY ...
I'M NOT ASKING TO TAKE IT BACK...
...SO MUCH AS TO SEAL IT.

I ONLY WISH TO SEAL SHIROGANE'S POWER.
A PACT WITH ONE OF THE FIVE COLORED THREADS CANNOT BE ABSOLVED UNTIL THE SPINNER DIES.
THEN WHAT ABOUT ME!?
WHAT!? JUST SHIRO-GANE!?
OH, I SEE.
THADUMP
SORRY, BUT YOU'LL STAY JUST THE SAME.
PAT
YOU WON'T HAVE ANY SPECIAL POWERS ANYMORE.
JUST YOUR EVERYDAY, ORDINARY KID.
THADUMP
THADUMP
I WON'T HAVE...

A LITTLE!!
YOU'RE DIS-PLEASED?
THAT'S NOT FAIR!
I WON'T LET YOU DO IT!
...MY SPECIAL POWERS ANYMORE?
YOU CAN SHOVE THAT IDEA IN YOUR EAR!!
Haaah...
Boo!
Boo!
I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO WAY AROUND IT...
LIFT
VERY WELL.

KNOT
HUH?
WHIP
WHIP
ONE, TWO, THREE, SHOOT!
ACK!
HUH?
WRAP
WRAP
SEIRAN, GO!
AH...
AAAH!!
TUG
TUG
WHAT IS THIS THING!?
IT WON'T UNDO!!
FASTENING A KNOT DOESN'T REQUIRE AN OFFICIAL TYING.
THIS IS ALL IT TAKES TO CREATE A SEAL.
YOU'RE KIDDING ME...
I CAN'T USE SHIROGANE NOW?
SHOCK
IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, GO AHEAD AND TRY.

THIS WOMAN IS UNBELIEVABLE!!
OH, THAT'S RIGHT...
YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH CONTROL OVER IT TO CALL IT OUT BY WILL.
I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ALL DISOBEDIENT CHILDREN.
DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ME OR SOMETHING!?
You always put me down!
YOU, YOU PIP-SQUEAK!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR WHINING!!
Give me a break...
What an earache...
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A CHILD!?
TODAY'S INCIDENT...
...AT THE HOTEL SHOWED IT ALL TOO CLEARLY.
YOU'RE RECK-LESS, CARE-LESS ...
...AND IGNO-RANT.


YOU ONLY ACTIVATE SHIROGANE BY GETTING EMOTIONAL.
THERE'S NOT ONE IOTA OF JUDGMENT IN YOUR TINY HEAD.
.....
SHE'S TEARING ME DOWN...
THE FIVE COLORED THREADS ARE SACRED TREASURES THAT DEMONSTRATE STRONG SPIRITUAL POWER.
THEY'RE NOT TOYS FOR LITTLE KIDS TO PLAY WITH.
...THE SAME WAY MY FATHER DID.

...HE LOOKED DOWN ON ME AND JUDGED ME SO CRUELLY.

...AND PRACTICALITY...

LECTURING ME ABOUT COMMON SENSE...

...HAVEN'T YOU EXPERIENCED SIGNS OF YOUR BODY REJECTING IT?
GULP
BESIDES ...
Anyone could see right through that.
WH... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
.....
YOUR BODY'S NOT SUITED TO HANDLE SHIROGANE. IF YOU CONTINUE TO USE IT...
...YOU'LL CAUSE IRREVOCABLE DAMAGE TO YOURSELF!

ABSO-LUTELY!
...I'LL BE STAYING HERE WITH YOU FOR THE NEXT FEW NIGHTS.
I HOPE THAT'S ALL RIGHT?
THAT'S WHY...
...AND PROVIDE THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY WITH A REPORT.
...I'D LIKE TO OBSERVE YOU ALL ON THE JOB...
AND WHILE I'M HERE...
Just what I need...
Uh-oh...
SHIRO-GANE...
AM I...
SHE WASN'T KIDDING.
I CAN'T FEEL ITS PRESENCE ANYMORE.

WOOOOW!
...DOOMED TO BECOME...
...AN EVERYDAY, ORDINARY GIRL?
DAISO
LITTLE
THIS MALL'S ENORMOUS!
IT'S THE GIANT MULTIPLEX EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT.
It's got eateries, a cinema, and a gym
IT'S SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN A WEEK.

DID YOU SAY POLTERGEIST!?
THAT'S RIGHT...
EVERY DAY, IT'S SOMETHING NEW.
SHOP WINDOWS BEING BROKEN, MACHINES RUNNING AMOK...
DO YOU...
...HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S CAUSING IT?
YES, WE DO...

THERE USED TO BE A PARK ON THIS PROPERTY.
IT WAS SMALL, BUT STILL HAD RIDES AND SUCH.
.....
IT WAS ALSO THE SITE OF...
...A STRING OF GORY MURDERS.
MURDERS !?
AAAH!
NOT SO LOUD!!
ONE OF THE PARK KEEPERS ...
...KILLED SOME OF THE CHILDREN WHO PLAYED HERE.

THE MURDERER SET HIS HOUSE...
...AND HIMSELF ON FIRE.
WHEN THEY SEARCHED THE CHARRED REMAINS OF HIS HOME ...
...THE BODIES OF THE CHILDREN WERE UN-COVERED.
HOW HORRID ...
AH, YES. I REMEMBER THAT STORY.
AFTER WHAT HAPPENED ...
...RUMORS OF A HAUNTING SPRUNG UP, AND THE PARK WAS CLOSED.
SO, YOU'RE SAYING THE VANDALISM GOING ON IS CONNECTED TO THOSE MURDERS?
THE NIGHT GUARDS CLAIMED THEY SAW THE SHADOW OF A TALL MAN.
SOME EVEN SAW HIM CARRYING WHAT LOOKED LIKE A BUTCHER KNIFE.
THAT'S WHEN THIS MALL WAS BUILT.

THEY'RE GUESSING THAT IT'S THE KILLER'S GHOST.
EVERYONE'S AT THEIR WIT'S END...
..AND SOME OF THE STAFF ARE THREATENING TO QUIT.
COOL IT, MISTER.
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'VE GOT THE FULL CAST OF TYERS HERE TODAY.
Okay, okay!
YOU HAVE TO HELP ME!!
I don't want to lose my job!
IF ANYTHING BAD HAPPENS, THEY COULD CANCEL THEIR FINANCIAL BACKING!
EXECUTIVE INVESTORS AND THE STOCKHOLDERS' FAMILIES HAVE BEEN INVITED TO PREVIEW THE MALL TODAY.
Grand Opening Preview Tour

WHETHER IT'S AN EVIL SPIRIT OR A HOMICIDAL MANIAC...
...WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT!
QUIT TREATING ME LIKE A KID!
Shoo! Shoo!
LITTLE CHILDREN BELONG AT HOME.
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, STANDING WITH THE REST OF US?
OKAY NOW...
VERY IMPRES-SIVE POSING, YOU GUYS, BUT...

...
...IN A MALL THIS HUGE ...
... TRACKING DOWN THE SPIRIT WON'T BE EASY.
YOU'RE RIGHT...
ACK!!
WHOA! WHAT'S THE MATTER, CHIKO!?
HIDE
DID YOU SEE SOME-THING!? WAS IT THE KILLER'S GHOST!?
.....
NO, EVEN WORSE...

HELLO.
IT'S YOU...
HUH...?
WHO IS THAT!?
?
THANK YOU FOR THE OTHER DAY...
DAUGHTER!?
I'M SORRY ...
...THAT MY DAUGHTER'S BEING SUCH A PAIN.

WHAT'S HE DOING HERE!?
THAT'S YOUR POP, CHIKO!?
WHSPR
WHSPR
THAT'S WHAT I WANNA KNOW!!
DAUGHTER!?
DOESN'T THAT MEAN ...?
HE THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY OR SOMETHING!?
HUH?
YOU NEVER SAID YOU WERE RICH!!
I'M HERE ON BUSINESS.
MY COMPANY INVESTED A LOT IN THIS MALL...
I NEVER WANTED ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIS MONEY!
FOR YOUR INFORMATION!
FREEZE
...I'M AMAZED YOU'RE SUCH A MONEY-GRUBBER.
WITH SUCH A WEALTHY FATHER ...
HEY, SHUT UP!!

CHILDREN SHOULD BE SEEN...
TURN
...NOT HEARD.

I AGREE.
... THEY'RE ALWAYS SHOOTING OFF THEIR MOUTHS.
WITH NO COMMON SENSE OR EXPERIENCE...
HUH!?
YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?
HE DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE HIS OWN DAUGHTER?
.....
You've shrunk, but...
THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU...
...HE DOESN'T CARE...
...AN OUNCE ABOUT ME!

CHIKO ...?
MY DAUGHTER CAME WITH YOU?
Uuuh, you see...
.....
AH!
WAIT, CHIKO!!
THUD
!?
I never heard anything about this!
WHAT ELSE?
AKEO-SAN!
WHAT DID YOU TELL THIS GUY!?
I don't believe this guy...
BUT WE KIDNAPPED HER!!
Don't keep us in the dark!
I SAID WE'RE TAKING CARE OF HIS DAUGHTER.

...WHEN I WAS THIS LITTLE.
I KNEW HE'D BE LIKE THAT.
I NEVER EXPECTED HIM TO SMILE AT ME LIKE A LOVING FATHER.
NOT EVEN...
WORK
IT'S NOT LIKE...
...HE'S EVER TAKEN A GOOD LOOK AT ME.

THE FIGHTS ALWAYS ENDED WITH A NEW BRUISE.
...HE FOUGHT WITH MY MOM OVER NOTHING.
ALL HE DID WAS WORK. AND AT HOME...
STOP IT!
DON'T HURT MOMMY!
SMACK
WHO DO YOU HAVE TO THANK FOR THE FOOD ON THE TABLE, HUH!?
YOU DON'T SUPPORT THIS FAMILY! SO SHUT YOUR MOUTH!!

...I KEPT QUIET.
AND SO...
IN SILENCE.
ALL I DID WAS WATCH.
I STAYED OUT OF IT.

NOW.
WHERE WAS I...?
THINGS ARE DIFFER-ENT NOW!
That's right!
I'M NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL ANYMORE!!
Uuuurgh!
Gasp!
Uuuuuh!
I HATE REMEMBER-ING THE PAST!!
'CAUSE I DON'T RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE AT ALL.
Waaah!
SOME-BODY SUE THE DESIGN-ER!!
THIS PLACE IS A MAZE!!
None of these shops are even open yet!!
We came in through the central entrance...
And then took a left onto the overpass in the B Wing...
LET ME SEE...
FLOOR MAP

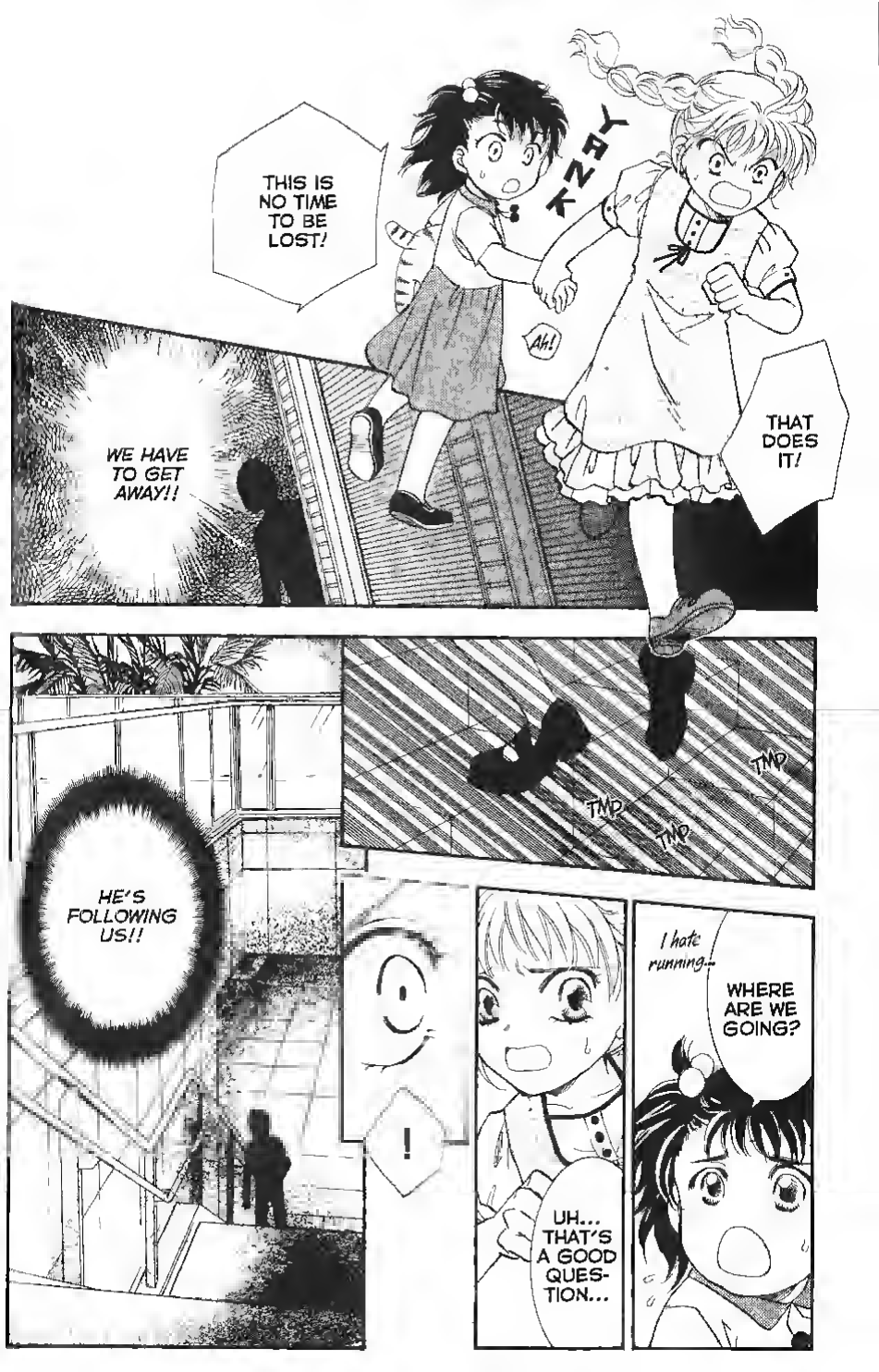
THUMP!
CLATTER!
HUH?
A CAT!?
WHAT'S A CAT DOING HERE!?
IT'S...
...JUST A TOY.
GYAAAH!!
MEEEOOOOW
SHOCK
OH...
TEAR
...YOURS?
IS THIS...

POP
THERE.
THAT ANSWERS MY QUESTION.
Thought so...
WAAAAH!!!
NOW IT SHOULD WORK AGAIN.
It's batteries just came out.
ARE YOU HERE ON THE TOUR?
WHERE'S YOUR MOMMY AND DADDY?
.....

I HATE ...
...MY DAD-DY.
ARE YOU LOST?
.....
I just got lost, myself.
!
WHEN DADDY'S MAD...
...HE HITS ME.
HE'S SCARY.
YOU KNOW, THE SAME THING HAPPENED TO ME!
I REALLY GOT IT WHEN I BROUGHT HOME A PUPPY.
YOU HATE YOUR DADDY, TOO?
WHEN WAKANA BROUGHT HOME A KITTY...
...HE GOT REALLY MAD.
THE POOR KITTY LOOKED SO LONELY.
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
I HATE HIS GUTS! ESPECIALLY NOW!

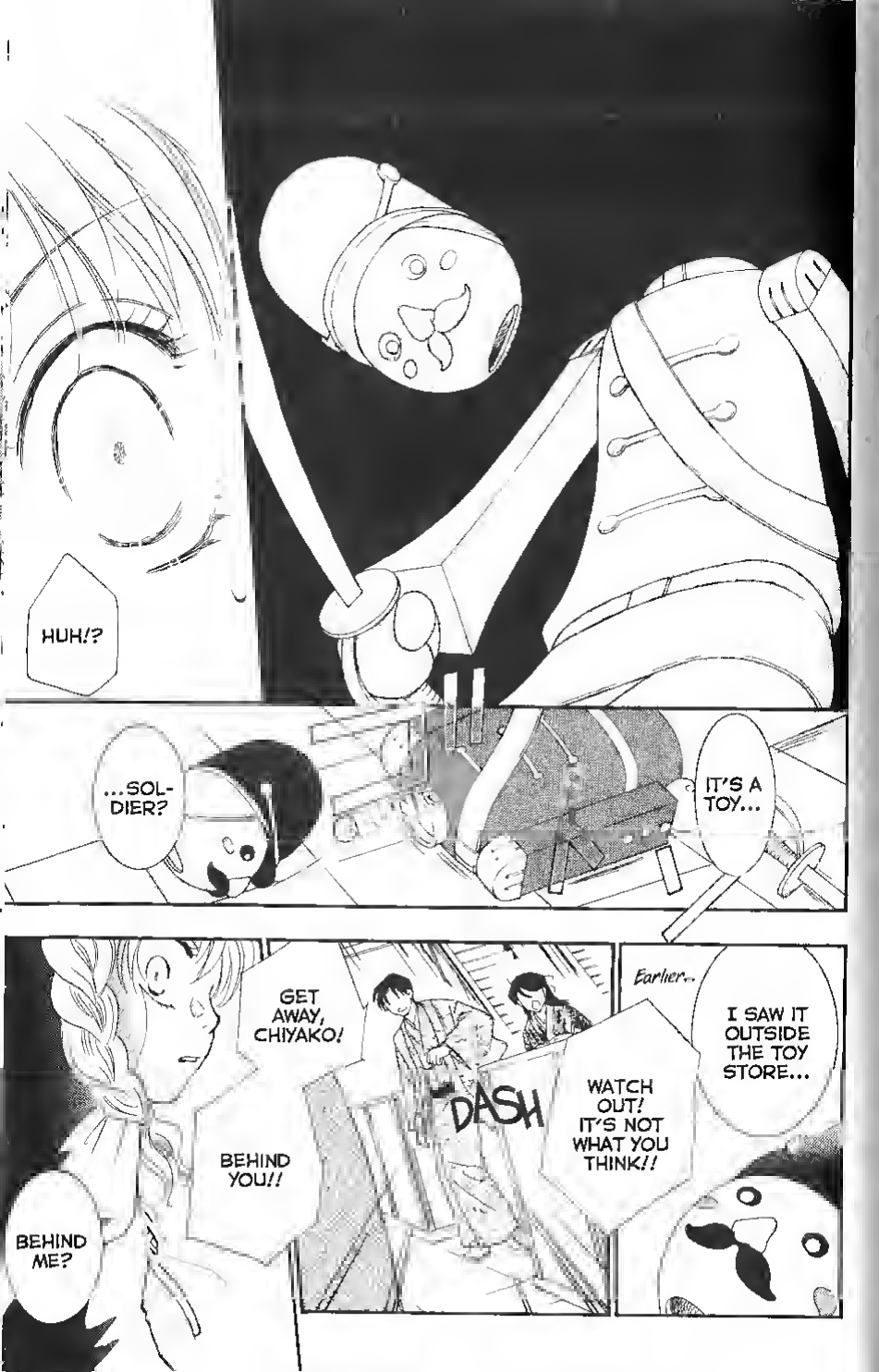
YAY! THEN WE'RE THE SAME!
IT'S NOT SOMETHING I'D CELEBRATE, BUT OKAY...
RIGHT ...
Yaaay! You fixed him!
MEOW
CHILL

JUST NOW...
...I COULD'VE SWORN I SAW SOMEBODY.
TURN
THE NIGHT GUARDS CLAIMED THEY SAW THE SHADOW OF A TALL MAN.
CHILL
FREEZE
CLIK
CLIK
CLIK
CLIK
I HEAR FOOT-STEPS ...
CLIK
SUZUTEN
...COMING CLOSER!
CLIK
THIS COULD BE BAD.
I CAN'T EVEN USE SHIROGANE!


I hate running...
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
UH... THAT'S A GOOD QUES-TION...
!
HE'S FOLLOWING US!!
TMP
TMP
TMP
WE HAVE TO GET AWAY!!
Ah!
KZZY
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE LOST!
THAT DOES IT!

Ah, there she is.
CHIKO!?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
We were looking for you!
NOT GOOO!!
WITH OUR SHORT, LITTLE LEGS, HE'LL BE ON US IN NO TIME!!
Thank God!
TSUNA!
AYA-SAN!!
LOOM
...IS HERE!!
THE KILLER'S GHOST ...

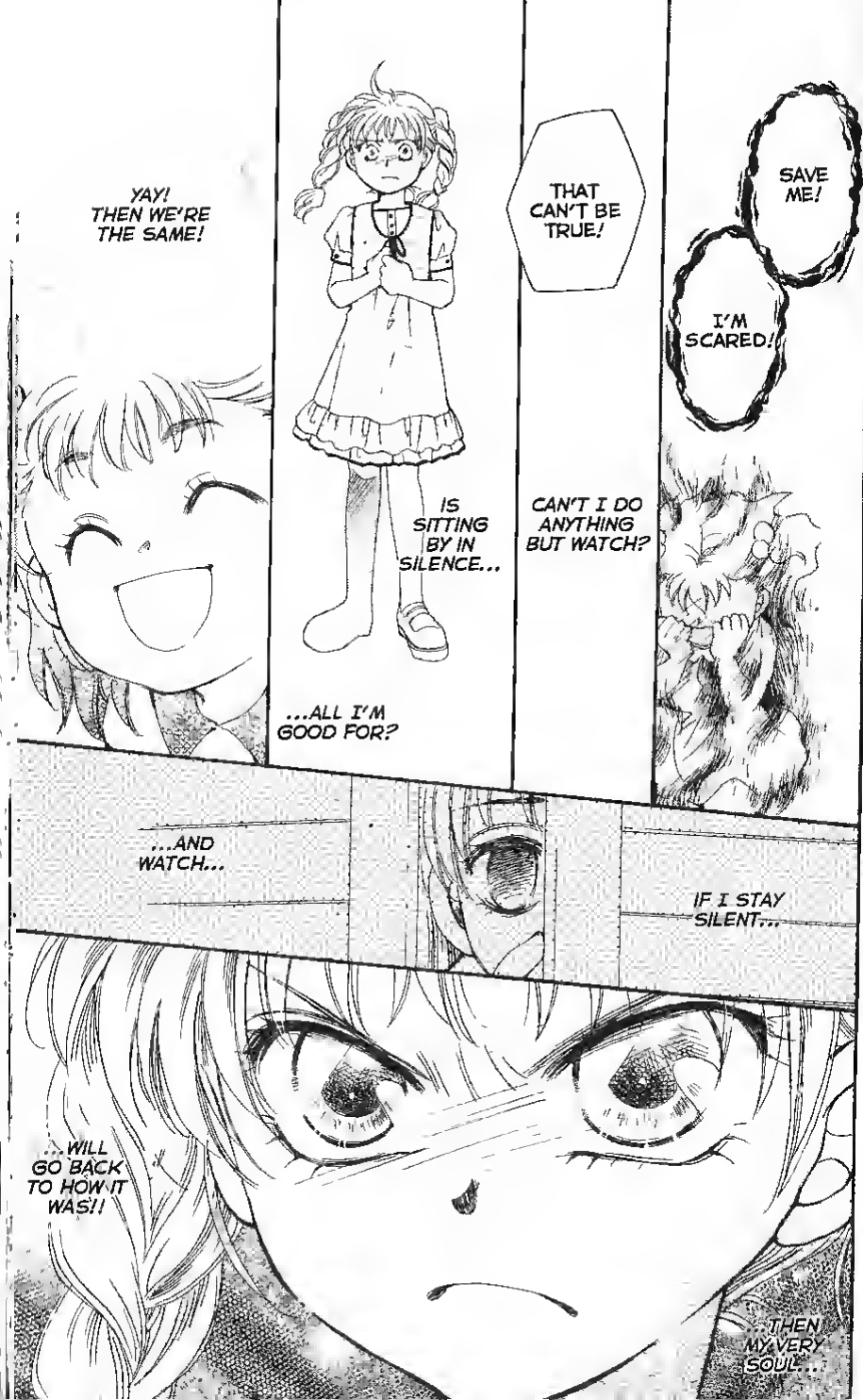
NO...!
SWISH
KOKURYU!
SPLASH


HUH!?
...SOL-DIER?
IT'S A TOY...
Earlier...
I SAW IT OUTSIDE THE TOY STORE...
WATCH OUT! IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!!
DASH
GET AWAY, CHIYAKO!
BEHIND YOU!!
BEHIND ME?

PLAY WITH ME, BIG SISTER...
CHILL
!?
H...
HOW?
THE POLTERGEIST WASN'T THE KILLER.
IT WAS ONE OF THE CHILDREN HE KILLED.

YOU'RE ...
...JUST LIKE ME, SEE?
SHE'S TOO STRONG!
I CAN'T SHAKE HER OFF!
YOU HATE YOUR DADDY TOO, RIGHT?
!
FWOOSH
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MASTER...
FWOOOOSH
AAAAAAH!

SMOLDER
I'M SCARED!!
IT'S SO HOT!!
.....
GUYS ...
SHE WAS A VICTIM, RIGHT?
SHE DIDN'T DO ANY-THING WRONG.
WHY CAN'T WE-
ENOUGH.
FWIP
SHE'S CONSUMED BY HATE AND DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER.
IT'S A LOST CAUSE.
IT'S CASES LIKE THIS...
...THAT MAKE ME DISLIKE CHILDREN.


YAY! THEN WE'RE THE SAME!
IS SITTING BY IN SILENCE...
...ALL I'M GOOD FOR?
THAT CAN'T BE TRUE!
CAN'T I DO ANYTHING BUT WATCH?
SAVE ME!
I'M SCARED!
...AND WATCH...
IF I STAY SILENT...
...WILL GO BACK TO HOW IT WAS!!
...THEN MY VERY SOUL...

SHE SPUN SHIRO-GANE!?
SHE BROKE SEIRAN'S SEAL!
FLASH
CHIYA-KO...
...GANE?
!?
SLICE
SHIRO...

MODE
RUMMAGE
RUMMAGE
TOSS
FLING
MODE
CRASH
Have some decency!
TIME OUT!
Tweeet!
Don't move!
CLIK
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
YOU SHOPLIFTER!
TRANSFOR-MATION COMPLETE!
TA DA!
Okay...
You better give that right back!
You really are a spoiled rich girl.
You just had to nab the trendiest outfit.

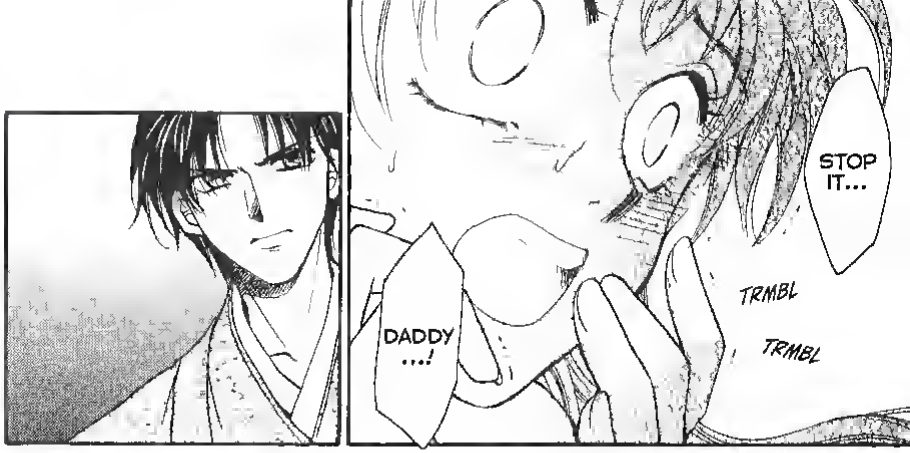
WAH ...
WAAAH ...
CROUCH
LET'S GET YOU HOME.
NOBODY'S GOING TO HURT YOU ANYMORE.
HERE.
HOLD ON TO THIS.
UNRAVEL
WHAT ABOUT ...
...MY KITTY ...?

SURE! YOU CAN TAKE YOUR KITTY WITH YOU!
GRIP
I'M SURE YOUR DADDY WILL UNDERSTAND.
FREEZE
?
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
I'M SCARED ...
SO SCARED ...
I'M SCARED OF MY DADDY.

HUH?
I HATE HIM.
I HATE...
...MY DADDY.
THESE ARE...
...WAKANA-CHAN'S MEMORIES!
I TOOK MY KITTY HOME.
BUT HE BROKE HIM.
!?
AND ALL OF MY FRIENDS...
HE BROKE THEM, TOO.
!!

I HATE BEING SCARED.
I'LL MAKE IT ALL GO AWAY.
I HATE DADDY!
SHE'S THE ONE...
...WHO CAUSED THE FIRE!
FWOOSH
I HATE HIM!!
WAKANA-CHAN'S FATHER...
...WAS THE KILLER!!

I'M SCARED...
NO...
NOOOO!!
IT'S CONSUMING HER...
SHE'S RESONATING WITH THE GIRL'S STRING OF FATE.
I'M SCARED...
CHIYAKO!?
SO SCARED...
SLIP
WAFT

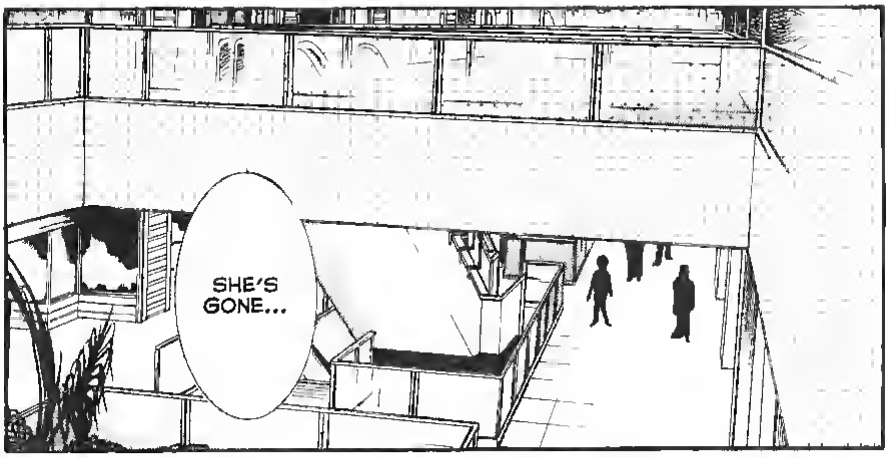

STOP IT...
TRMBL
TRMBL
DADDY ...!

HUG

I'LL...
IT'S OKAY.
...PROTECT YOU.
I'LL BE OKAY...
THAT'S RIGHT.

I'VE FELT THIS...
...SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
...WAIT.
GASP!

THAT'S ONE WAY TO SNAP BACK TO REALITY.
PFFH
This isn't funny!
WHOOOOA!!
SHUFFLE
THRDUMP
...SAY WHAT I...
...THINK HE DID!?
THRDUMP
DID HE JUST..!
THRDUMP
THRDUMP
WHAT'S GOING ON!?
HOLD ON.
THE GIRL!
WHERE'D WAKANA-CHAN GO!?
...PROTECT YOU!?
I'LL...
SPURT



I COULDN'T SAVE HER...

...BECAUSE I LET GO OF SHIROGANE.

AHHH!!
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
WHAT'S THE MATTER!?
CHIYAKO!?
CHIKO!?
TWINGE
TWINGE
WHAT...
WHAT'S GOING ON!?

YOUR BODY'S NOT SUITED TO HANDLE SHIROGANE. IF YOU CONTINUE TO USE IT...
COLLAPSE!!
...THAN MY USUAL REACTION!
THIS HURTS TEN TIMES MORE...
...YOU'LL CAUSE IRREVOCABLE DAMAGE TO YOURSELF!

OFF RECORDING #2

The final member of the Five Colored Threads team showed up in the Sixth Binding chapter. I wanted her to play a classic Japanese instrument, so I decided to go with the koto. However, I've never actually heard it played in real life before, so I made a last-minute reservation at a recital of one. To kill some time during intermission, I loitered around the hotel where the performance hall was, and ended up using it for the setting in the story. I love how I never put any experience to waste.

The Seventh Binding chapter was one scary event after another. I feel I must apologize for that. I'd originally written the arc to take place over three chapters, and was going to feature them all together in the next volume...oh, well. Witnessing Chiko's family background, it really is only one fragment of the whole story. Please read the rest of the series to find out more.

Now, as for the covers, we've had Chiko and Tsuna so far...and if we keep up this theme of featuring one member of each of the Five Elements on the covers, that means this series should continue to at least five volumes. At least...I hope it works out that way. Everybody's support is a heavy factor in the realization of that dream, so please stick with me from here on in! I'm serious. And I'll be doing my best to solicit that support from you all with more interesting stories and action-packed fun!

One morning at work
I don't trust myself to wake up on time.
When I was about to go to bed...
...I left a note for my assistant to find when she awoke
Please wake me up at XX o'clock!
Oh, Mek-san left me a note
It was while working on chapter seven..
Yaaaawn...
Wake me uuuup ...
Wakana-chan will jolt you awake!!
Ew!
Photocopied

• OFFICIAL WEB SITE
[MIX★SPACE]
http://id74.net

I'm waiting to hear your impressions!
Go! Comi
28047 Dorothy Drive, Suite 200
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

SPECIAL THANKS
TAKITAKI, MU'CHAN, DOKUAMI, HI-TAN, MITSUKO
RIU, KAMINA, MARU, K.SAITOH, CHITAKA
MY FAMILY.....and YOU!

FOUR GUARDIANS OF THE NIGHT SKY

You may have noticed strange symbols on the back covers and chapter breaks of *Bound Beauty*. There's even one tattooed on the body of Tsuna on the first cover! And yet these symbols have yet to be mentioned in the course of the story. What are they – and why are they there?

They come from the Chinese legend of the *Four Guardians of the Night Sky*. According to ancient Chinese astronomy, the fantastic beasts depicted in the symbols reside in four quadrants of the sky: North, South, East and West. Each quadrant represents an element, a season, and is associated with an animal deity that serves as its guardian. These animal deities are the red bird (*suzaku*), the blue dragon (*seiryu*), the black tortoise (*genbu*), and the white tiger (*byakko*).

You may have noticed that the symbol tattooed on Tsuna's body doesn't match any of the beasts mentioned above. (It looks like a cross between a horse and a demon – but what is it really?) We'll explain his symbol in a moment, but first take a look at the chart below, which outlines the relationship between each symbol and the characters in the story to whom they have been visually (if not verbally) connected.

Character	Color	Element	Animal	Position	Season
Aya	Black	Water	Tortoise	North	Winter
Akeo	Red	Fire	Bird	South	Summer
Isora	Blue	Wind	Dragon	East	Spring
Chiyako	White	Metal	Tiger	West	Fall
Hirotsuna	Yellow	Earth	Kirin	Center	N/A

Hirotsuna is the "odd man out" as he is the fifth member of four-symbol legend. However, there is another legend deeply entwined into the fabric of *Bound Beauty* – that of the *Five Elements* that are used in connection with the Colored Threads, one of which each Tyer in the story represents. It is by combining the *Five Elements* with the *Four Guardians* that we create a place for the Earth element that Tsuna wields – as the "center point" of the combined legends. (A rather honorary position for a scamp like Tsuna!) His corresponding animal is the "kirin", the Eastern equivalent to the Western unicorn, only with a draconic flair.

Whether or not the symbols of these mythological beasts will play into the plot has yet to be seen, but at the very least, it would be nice to see all the male characters stripped down to the waist, sporting full-body tattoos down their backs! (Well, one can hope...!)